

THE
GENERAL ELECTION.

A
SERIES OF LETTERS
CHIEFLY BETWEEN
TWO FEMALE FRIENDS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. WALTER, AT HOMER'S HEAD,
CHARING-CROSS.
MDCCLXXV.

STANDARD MEMORIAL

STANDARD OF LETTERS



TWO VOLUMES

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL II

PRINTED FOR J. WATTS, AT HOMER'S HEAD,
CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.
MDCCCXXXV.

THE
GENERAL ELECTION.

LETTER XXIV.

MISS SIDNEY TO MISS FIELDING.

PLEASANT this, and equally
modest as pleasant!—So then,
after a life spent in the service of the
court, a fortune ruined, and a voice
ever at their command when the
cause was a justifiable one, your fa-
ther is cast off as a fool because he
will not be a knave, and is left to
repent at leisure. However, my dear

VOL. II.

B

girl,

girl, see what it is to be squeamish— if one won't another will; so that bad men seldom or ever fail to effect their bad purposes. — But, on my word, the court has now caught a tartar — He has, it is true, sufficient spirit to do their work, but is much too great a friend to himself ever to neglect his own, and having served them in a single instance, will render them subservient to him in a million.

Well—the nation will pay for all—a patched up election, a wounded constitution—O rare—but will no day of recompence await them? will the people exert themselves only on trifling occasions? or will they not rather teach them to distinguish between the possible and the impossible, and set up a dreadful land-mark in politics, to deter others from following their infamous example?

That the ministry is broken, disjointed, and irresolute, has been repeatedly

peatedly proved—All the men who deserved to bear the public offices have retired, and their vacancies been filled up by ignorance and venality. Did the people then but know their own strength—did they but feel the firm ground on which their feet are now set, they would shake even the throne to its centre, or compel the weak and wicked servants, by which it is surrounded, to flee before them. Opposition, Sophia, is now brought to a fearful point; we are either free, or we are enslaved; and so great is my dependence on the alarm liberty must receive, that I tremble, yet anxiously await the decision of the question.

Charles, if he was not much too wise, and too moral, to countenance gambling, would stake his whole fortune against the success of the court—Mr. Stickler appears to him like another Roman chief, haranguing

a justly and dangerously incensed people, and he will imagine that sovereignty itself must appease the storm by every necessary, every demanded concession.—Nay, Sophia, if we were only to judge by the zeal with which we females defend a favourite article of polite faith, or polite distinction, we could not expect this daring on the one hand, and this spirit on the other, to have a very amicable termination — And so formidable have I been taught to consider popular commotions, that I can only wish, for the safety of the country, that our courtiers may make a timely retreat.

Charles terrifies me, by declaring he will be a spectator of the contest for expiring liberty: the features, he says, will mark the partizans as they approach: those who come to save, will appear with honest confidence; those to destroy, with da-
stardly

stardly confusion. I shall if possible divert him from his design; for in my humble opinion, it is much better to sleep in whole bones, and take things on the report of our friends, than pay the price of our personal safety for the gratification of our curiosity.

As to disposing of the articles you mention, make yourself perfectly easy—if no other method can be struck out your will shall be done; but you don't seem to recollect, that the temporary accommodation will be but a poor relief to two men accustomed to live like gentlemen, and whose sources of subsistence are all stopped up—Besides, why hazard the carriage to London? don't I, your friend, know their value, and cannot I advance the sum they would produce, and take the baubles when we are so happy as to meet again?—You are a novice, as to these matters—

We in the metropolis know how to negotiate, so as to dispatch business, and you must submit yourself to our superior judgement.

Charles beyond measure compassionates the trials you sustain—persecuted by your uncle, trembling for your father—but his honour you have the satisfaction to hear is inviolate; and as to his fortune, you have so long been sensible of its desperation, that you should not let the last stroke fall heavy on your gentle heart.

I wish your aunt's recovery most ardently, and would attempt even impossibilities in your service; but, for fear of doing wrong, restrain myself perhaps from doing right, and you still languish in your deplorable condition.

But let not your noble courage be cast down—Charles shall rescue you when you least expect it—destroy
the

the giant, possess himself of the castle, and bear the captive damsel off to freedom and happiness. I shall never love the name of politics, was I to live whole centuries from the date of this epistle; for have they not been the cause of every cruel separation we have experienced, and of every anxiety you have known? Your grandfather, indeed, for wise purposes, permitted your uncle to spend his infancy with his near relation—The plot succeeded, and he became his heir—but these seeds of political discord were sown in his heart, which can alone be eradicated by that icy hand that suspends its pulsation, and constituted him and his brother, to the end of their existence, opponents and enemies.

At the bottom they are nevertheless most affectionately attached. What pains must they not then be at to stifle the feelings of nature,

counteract the dictates of reason, and persist in destroying the peace and amity of each other?

My grandmother is very desirous of comprehending this perplexed piece of family history—Two brothers perpetually quarrelling for the good of their country exceeds her utmost credulity, though I labour the point with all my might and main, in order to give her a clear idea of it—and the poor children, she observes, what a difficult task must they have had to please both parties! But, continues the good old lady, if the sister is as gentle as the brother is sensible, their concessions must have secured them from unkind treatment.

You see, Sophia, how little my grandmother knows of the haughty spirits we have to deal with, or she would not thus talk at her ease. However as there is no remedy, I wish you could adopt my mode of being even with

with the vexations of life—For, convinced that as alternate storms and sun-shine is the natural operation of the elementary world, so alternate war and peace is of the domestic; I laugh through both the one and the other, and believe me it is folly to weep at what is the common tenor of human events, the inevitable revolutions of existence.

I am, &c.

E. SIDNEY.

LETTER XXV.

MR. FIELDING TO MISS FIELDING.

AND would the patriots receive my father? would they make advantage of his unmerited misfortunes?—Then are they by much a more contemptible set of men than I

B 5 conceived

conceived them to be. I always understood that the basis of true patriotism was the love of our country, not the being rendered desperate in our fortunes, or disgusted by our disappointments; and was even so charitable as to believe Mr. Stickler would have been Mr. Stickler, though his circumstances had been as prosperous as we know they were adverse on his starting on patriotic ground.

My father, however, you may let the little-minded partizan know, is incapable of changing hands, and thinks a sufferer like himself far more gloriously situated in retirement than on the throne of undeserved popularity; that his wishes are still with the court, so far as the peace and good order of the community is the object of their attention; but that though they should be guilty of ever such a departure from what he
once

once persuaded himself was their character, he will never become an instrument of augmenting the intestine broils, or increasing the misery of the public.

Nevertheless, if it will answer any purpose to you, do not throw the noble gentleman into absolute despair: my father, you may safely tell him, is not yet in a condition to be tampered with, and it will be better to defer, than by premature application risk the success of his scheme.

O! my sister, what thanks do we not owe Providence for our miraculous escape!—This much-loved, this now repentant father has confessed to me, that if I had not sustained him in his hour of disgraceful exigence, he verily believes he should have put a period to his existence.

Thus madly does desperation seek to heal the wounds of calamity—for from having ruined his children in

their fortunes, he would have irreparably wounded them in their peace, by plunging himself into an awful eternity, as a less dreadful evil than beholding their faces, who wish to live only to soften his disappointments and mortifications.

In the first transports of his resentment he was for drawing up a memorial of his unjustifiable treatment, and laying it before the public; but I soon convinced him of the impropriety of that step: for though the benevolent part would have pitied, the judicious would have condemned, the malevolent sneered, and the partizans rejoiced; so that he has intirely dropped the idea. The election, so interesting to the whole nation, is now on the point of decision. Mr. Stickler and Lord Ruleall have collected their forces, and the bold opponent of patriotism will soon step forth.

He

He must, Sophia, be a most intrepid, and at the same time a most contemptible character. Mr. Stickler, as the favourite of the people, has all imaginable right to stand the poll: if he succeeds, what becomes of the anti-patriot's heroism? if he fails, what honour can he acquire? for, unsupported as he is by a single character of reputation, the object of public odium, and the declared bully of the court, will it not be plain, that on similar terms any wretch might have crept into the House?

Had my father consented to take this scandalous office upon him; had the finger of scorn been so justly uplifted against him, as against this enterprizer, I think I should have renounced the country of my nativity, and sought a hiding place where the shame could not have reached me: but now that I am happily on a level
with

with every common spectator, and only feel for the insult offered to the constituents of a free and illustrious metropolis, I shall not fail to make such observations on this great æra, as will enable me to pronounce decisively on the genius of my countrymen.

When a foreign enemy is on the point of invading us, do we not make a strong head against the calamity? and we have much more to apprehend from this court attack, than from ten thousands of foreign foes.—In the common cause the band of society is drawn close, the natural rights of the subject unanimously defended; but in cases of inbred war, if we can be brought to concur with the schemes of the base and the daring, though at whatever price the opposition, we are at once guilty of self-desertion, and become the instruments of the national destruction.

Was I writing to any other person than you, who are so perfectly in the secret of court measures and court principles, these reflections would be deemed premature. But I am convinced (and I fancy you will not entertain a doubt) that as the court has planned, so it will execute, without such an opposition as must shake the foundation of the kingdom—But I go to prove the justness of my discernment, and bring these men in office to the test, who, rather than gratify the vanity of him they hate, will endanger the safety of all those they ought to love; and rather than own themselves conquered, hazard the dissolution, for aught they know, of the British empire.

I am,

Most affectionately,

H. FIELDING.

L E T T E R XXVI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

THE court, my dear sister, has at length shewn us how capable it is of parrying a formidable stroke.

On the day of election, it was generally expected that some minion would start up, though at the hazard of his life, to check the popular torrent; but so far was this expectation from being answered, that it soon became apparent the courtiers, though too stubborn to recede to the last possible moment, were much too timid to brave their foes a second time, on such peculiar ground—for liberty, like a too edged sword, whilst it defends its friends, makes grievous slaughter amongst those who, by their base
and

and cowardly attacks, prove themselves its determined enemies.

But whether this event, so long wished for and so anxiously obtained, will, or perhaps to speak more properly, can be productive of the promised advantages, remains yet to be tried—By hoping too much, we are for ever laying traps (if I may so express myself) for disappointments—as if life did not sufficiently teem with ills, without this voluntary, this frantic destruction of our own happiness.

'Tis true, I am politician enough to perceive, that the court, by their wonted industry, have insured themselves a majority—so that let the question be as critical or important as it may, if the spirit of the few does not counter-act the force of the many, our situation is a most alarming one. To speak my fears,
however,

however, in one word, my dear, I cannot help apprehending that our state officers, after the example of our able physicians, have felt our pulse, until they have obtained a perfect knowledge of our political temperature, and convinced themselves, that our fever is incapable of rising higher than their skill can manage; if so, it is all indeed at an end with us, and our saviour will prove our destroyer. We were, I grant you, wretched; but hope still was ours; the flattering hope, that whenever we choose to exert our strength, we could effectually shake off our bondage—forgetful that our champion is a mere man, notwithstanding all our idolatry: and should he only have given himself an opportunity of shewing us his *impotence* in office, and our consequentially helpless condition—must we not curse the
the

the officious zeal that robbed us of so soothing, so comfortable an illusion, as we have for years enjoyed? Perhaps you will say with your fair friend, of all fools in creation commend you to a patriotic one—in every relationship, except that of a husband—They have so fertile an invention, so convenient a digestion, so marvellous a confidence in their deity, that the most palpable absurdities and the most contradictory events are passed current, and received as so many gospel truths. But whilst I appear to bear hard on one party, let me not suffer the other to escape my pen—If patriots can believe in despite of reason, courtiers can dare beyond every legal, every moral restraint—and if the first is sanguine in improbabilities, the second is base in the minutest as well as greatest actions.

This

This is the utmost that can be said on a subject where all is conjecture—but you may be assured I shall keep a sharp look out, in order to communicate the earliest intelligence of every characteristic step; and, in the mean time, beg to hear how the political world goes with you and your friends.

I am, &c.

H. FIELDING.

LET-

LETTER XXVII.

MISS SIDNEY TO MISS FIELDING.

YOUR Piddleton candidate, whom you must give me leave to call by his proper name, viz. Mr. Harper, is become the veriest priest in creation—that is, according to the licentious idea of the function—for I am strangely mistaken if he would not pimp or lye in the service of any right honourable patron.

At this present writing, however, my dear, I believe he fancies himself in love—Fanny Granville has caught his eye, and Fanny Granville seems to have caught his heart—for he cannot talk, therefore it is presumable he cannot think of any thing else. I gave her his character, that she might not be deceived in him—though I am not quite clear

clear whether it was not affronting her understanding to suppose her capable of listening to such a pedantic coxcomb.—He was very particular in his enquiries into who she was, and whence she came—To the first I replied, a gentlewoman, and to the next, from Piddleton—He instantly recollected he had seen her, and without other introduction challenged her for an old acquaintance. Fanny behaved like the sweet girl I have ever found her—civil, yet distant—grateful, yet discouraging. He was not to be shunned, but having got information of an engagement the family had, produced himself her announced visitant, and took up his sitting in the little parlour. Fanny received him like herself—was beyond expression obliged to him for the honour he intended her, but her situation in that house (it was, however, an honest false-

falsehood) made it impossible to entertain him as the friend and acquaintance of her lady—she would, if he pleased, send him in tea, or any thing else he would like to order.

He said abundance of elegant things upon her person, abused Providence in the most opprobrious terms for not having made a better provision for her, and intreated that she would no longer do her charms the injustice to bury them in obscurity. Fanny, as an English woman, insisted upon her privilege of choice, and told him it was the situation of all others the most agreeable to her inclination, and much superior to her best expectations, and making him a courtesy retired.

He preferred his complaint the next time he saw us, and Fanny made her modest defence—He even went so far as to accuse her of artifice

tifice and pride; though for the life of me I could not enter into the idea of either. I lamented that her living in my family did not give me the authority to play the tyrant, and there the matter ended.

But Justice Woodcock, as I shall henceforth make bold to call my uncle, was in a flame—he should not have thought of fops making a disturbance, because a young girl was discreet, and if he was master of that house, he should think it necessary to hint to him that his visits could be dispensed with. But unfortunately his opinion was not asked, nor his power such as to make us declare war with your brother's friends — so the poor Justice having fretted himself warm, was obliged to fret himself cool again.

I advised Fanny to scarify her face, like the good nuns I have
some-

somewhere heard of, for her convenience and protection ; but she seems to conceive she has very little to fear, so long as she continues in a sober family and retains her natural faculties.

So your uncle, I find, does not mean to be in the House this session, but has put in your intended. I look upon it, Sophia, he has done a very wise thing, for as he never yet opened his mouth in that celebrated assembly, but to give utterance to an occasional little monosyllable, if your lord elect has the gift of speech, he may take his brother representatives an hour or so by the ear, for the good of his country—and who loves to pay their money for nothing? Charles Effingham is endeavouring to bring his matters to bear, so as to give himself an opportunity of visiting you.

X

VOL. II.

C

An

An estate in certain districts, where your uncle boasts he has interest, will, I believe, be purchased by him, and you know it will be a very convenient thing to compliment the uncle, in order to renew his old acquaintance with the niece.—But this, my dear, is dreadfully trespassing orders—your brother is a commanding officer, Charles a subaltern, and I whatever I please—for my judgment is, I will assure you, held in such high repute, that my opinion is, in general, decisive.

You will thus discover that we are full of business—but my mother's plain request to you is, that you would make her house, in all events, your own, and leave the rest to time, and her invention; and so lifted up, indeed, is the dear woman with her success in Justice Woodcock's affair, as to persuade herself

herself that by mere dint of her eloquence, before many months are at an end, she shall be able to put your father and uncle's hand amicably in each other, and settle matters to your intire satisfaction.— Ah! this same castle-building spirit, how does it run away with the whole species, old and young, rich and poor!—None have the strength or the wisdom to resist it but your, &c.

E. SIDNEY.

LETTER XXVIII.

MR. FIELDING TO MISS FIELDING.

I SHALL for once, Sophia, surprise you—A ray of good fortune has dawned upon me, and that too from a quarter the most providential, and the most eligible of any our wishes could have marked out.

I confess such has been the train of mortifications I have experienced, that I am hardly able to bear this little sun-shine with propriety—But you know it was always your admonition, that though I could not command success, I should always endeavour to deserve it.

Returning very disconsolate one morning from the frowns, I may say, of Lord Ruleall's levee, a young gentleman of a most prepossessing aspect gave me the compliments of
the

the morning ; and as we seemed both of us to be directing our steps towards the Park, we insensibly fell into farther conversation.

I have, Sir, said the stranger, frequently observed you at the levee we have just quitted, but I presume our visits there do not result from the same motives—Mine is merely curiosity, yours I apprehend business.

I bowed assent, for I know not how it was, but I was unable to reply.

You seem, Sir, continued he (you will excuse the observation, as it is in reality not an uncivil one) to understand but little of the complexion of the times—The public is divided into two classes—the alarmed, and the designing—The first mean exceedingly well, but are too rapid in their determination ; the second have only one point in view, and that is to deceive their neighbours—I can-

not speak plainer on so critical a subject.

My conduct, I give you my honour, is not self-dictated; the ambition and the humour of my family have thrown me into my present track, and—

I beg your pardon a thousand times for my impertinence, said the stranger—But if you should not, on a knowledge of my connexions and character, have any insuperable objection, I would beg leave so far to bring good out of evil, as to obtain the pleasure of your acquaintance.

There was no refusing so polite, so obliging a request; I therefore received a card, which was superscribed with his name and address, and we parted with seemingly mutual reluctance.

I soon found, on mentioning his name at the coffee-house, that he was the son and heir of a great merchant, who, though he kept him to
tight

tight finances during his life-time, died and left him an immense fortune; it was moreover added as his characteristic, in the opinion of our *beaux esprits*, that he was a heavy, formal young man, which served doubly to recommend him to my approbation.

The next time we met, I smilingly addressed him, telling him that as I learned how much I should gain by his acquaintance, I thought it incumbent upon me to inform him how much he must lose by mine—In a word, Sir, continued I, my father's zeal for the court party has nearly undone him, and he has no better prospects for his son than obtaining a court appointment, and my uncle, though a man of some property, has given me up to a life of dependance, because I cannot adopt the virulence of his party tenets.

I take your hand, Sir, said he, in friendship, and flatter myself we

shall neither of us have reason to repent this accidental connexion.

Weeks passed to our mutual satisfaction, many hours of which were spent with each other; but he never, till within the last four and twenty, gave me the least intimation of his generous designs towards me.

My father, said he to me yesterday noon, as we took a walk together in the Park, was as great a humourist as any part of your family, and though rich dealt me out so slender an allowance, that, unapprehensive of his then approaching dissolution, I communicated my wishes to some of my friends, of obtaining a place in a public office—They commended my love of independence, and promised me their interest; but as vacancies must be waited for, it was not till within these three months that they had the power of accommodating me, and within the succeeding ten days
my

my father died. The consequential acquisition of fortune to this event, though it did not disqualify me for holding my office, rendered the salary, which is only two hundred pounds per year, no object to me: but as I could have no right to sell (which is indeed the almost universal practice) what I had not purchased, I could not help wishing to resign in favour of a worthy successor; I amused myself with visiting Lord Ruleall's levee, in order to pick one out if possible, and I have now found him; if you will permit me to add, *thou art he*. To spare your feelings, however, and leave your gratitude *duely* untaxed, I will confess to you, that if I had met with any man that I could have received more pleasure from serving, or could have discovered was more deserving of being served, you had never been the person.

Charles, Miss Sidney, and my father are delighted with my good fortune, and I am this day to introduce my patron to their acquaintance.

Thus released from the miserable necessity of receiving that man's bounty, who has shut me out of his heart (for has he not forbid my correspondence?) you must, my dear Sophia, contrive the means, without making it personal, to stop my future supplies—I declined, indeed, calling at the banker's, resolved to part with every little valuable for my father's accommodation, rather than let him subsist, or subsist myself on the bread of unkindness—But he waited upon me at my lodgings, and told me it was my uncle's order my usual sums should be continued to me, and I would not, for my father's sake, fight against what was then so evidently my own interest. The good time is, however, at length arrived, when I
can

can indulge the wishes of my heart without wounding my conscience, and I expect you will at once contribute to my felicity, and let me receive your tender congratulations. Mr. Effingham has loaded me with civilities; Miss Sidney supported my spirits by unexampled condescensions, and I now seem restored to new existence; but can I ever forget such capital obligations? Make your life, my dear sister, as happy as possible, and be encouraged by the blessing derived on me to look forward to better days—for better days must be the reward of all your sisterly affection, your filial piety, your benevolent concern for all mankind.

I am, &c.

S. FIELDING.

LETTER XXIX.

MISS FIELDING TO MISS SIDNEY.

IF I have either judgment or penetration, you have, my Emma, by a most generous manœuvre, contrived to impose upon my unsuspecting brother, and render both him and me unspeakably happy.

The incident of meeting with a stranger, and the consequential friendship, though I own conducted in a masterly manner, has too much the air of management to impose upon me, who know what generous things you are capable of, to pass upon me in the light it is represented; I shall therefore give you no unnecessary information, only telling you that my brother, father, together with your friend, will for ever hold the obligation in due esteem. — Eternal blessings on your happy invention! endless felicity

city await the judicious instrument of its execution! for Henry sees no more in the affair than Providence and human benevolence, nor shall I interrupt his honest satisfaction.

My brother is curious to hear how we rural patriots have managed—Shall I tell him through your means?—However, lest he should wish to see his sister's epistle, I will so separate the political from the domestic part, as to enable you to shew him the one, without a glimpse of the other.

The election was a spirited one; an opposition, which, however vain, filled our hands with business—The hall, and every avenue thereto, was overspread with drunken heroes, who, for the honour of their country, had deprived themselves of their reason. The last day's poll, at which my uncle attended in person in support of Mr. Graham, a stone thrown
by

by the adverse party at the back of the coach, so dismayed this patriotic relation, that he has not been well since—Yet let me in justice add, that it absolutely made its way (you may guess by what means) into the coach, and grazed his head, though not broke it; but what will not a man endure for the good of his country?

I found his temper so propitious, during his little confinement, that I ventured to read him my brother's last letter—He condescended to profess himself pleased with it—There could be no artifice in it, as it was not intended for his perusal, and moreover as Henry had not spared either party; for he has truly, niece, given Mr. Stickler a *devilish* wipe or two (I transcribe his phraseology) before he knows whether he deserves it or not. Then pausing a few moments, he resumed—but I tell you, Sophia, Mr. Stickler is the man of all men
living

living best able to deal with a corrupt set of ministers, and stem the formidable torrent of tyranny. He has, be assured, a rod in soak for them, and will teach the base court what it is for a brave people to be provoked, in a cause so near their hearts as their invaluable liberties.

They shall, indeed, in such a country as this, bring in their minion, and expect him to sit quietly, under a roof which must either answer the purpose of its institution, or, together with the institution, fall to the ground!—Tell your brother it shall be as many thousands in his way, as he compels courtiers to fly, when the day of conflict arrives, and the battle of liberty or death is decided to the whole kingdom.

I am obliged to hide my tremblings, lest I should be spurned for a coward; but must I not either tremble, or prove myself an unnatural wretch, to have
a father

a father and a brother, so abundantly beloved, in the midst, as it were, of this general confusion?—O my dear Emma, let me know how you go on by every post, or I shall die with apprehension. My uncle cannot imagine how my father and brother contrive to subsist, yet holds fast his integrity, and leaves them to God and the wide world.

As to your father, Sophia, he deserves to suffer, and I heartily wish his sufferings may fall heavy on him, until he is both cured, and repents of his folly—But Henry—Henry, continued he, (breaking off an officious sigh into a hem) if he had avoided one step, should never have wanted, because he would never have ceased to merit a friend. I begged him to explain himself—He referred me to time, if I was really ignorant, not impertinent (that was his good-natured distinction) for that time would

would bring many things to light which he was bound to keep inviolably secret.

These dark hints I own disturb me—some wretch must have been at work—yet how, or wherefore, I cannot devise, unless it is my patriot lover—so that time you see is my only resource. My poor aunt, whom you know I daily visit, seems, as if by miracle, to be recovering the use of her faculties—on approaching her bed-side, a few hours ago, she extended her hand to me, and laboured hard for articulation. My uncle commends me much for my affectionate attention, as he calls it; but you, who know what reason I have to love her, know how little merit there is in my conduct on that occasion—but I fear it is in vain to hope for an event, which for years has not been deemed within human probability.

Surely,

Surely, surely, when these public commotions have once subsided, we shall be reunited, either in town or country. One thing I have, however, discovered, that though my uncle was pleased to make all the bustle of a public sale, in order the more severely to mortify my father; every article of our furniture was bought up by him, and is in his possession—Would to heaven he would restore them to their original owner, what it is impossible he should ever enjoy. My father, now that his court friends have shewn themselves in their infamous colours, is, I hope, perfectly cured of his party attachments—and how happily we might live in future, your imagination will sufficiently suggest, provided we could once melt this rock, my uncle's heart—but that too must be a work of time; for I have long since tried and proved how capable it is of resisting
my

my little eloquence, and how undued with the gift of sympathy. My mornings are spent nearly as usual, except that my uncle, whenever I read any article that he conceives hits my father's folly particularly hard, or ridicules his disappointments, has the cruelty to make me dwell upon it, so that my breakfast is generally concluded with a shower of tears; but I have, since the receipt of my brother's letter, wiped them away, I hope for ever. Let me know the result of your connexion with Mr. Harper — Every trifle becomes of the utmost importance in such critical circumstances as mine—for the drowning wretch is for catching at every twig. Therefore, my good Emma, write soon, and omit not a single tittle.

I am, &c.

S. FIELDING.

L E T T E R X X X .

MISS SIDNEY TO MISS FIELDING.

YOUR patriots, my Sophia, are true bullies—when danger is at a distance, they bravely defy it, but as it approaches, dexterously turn their backs, and prove their leading principle to be *discretion*.

Your brother begs I will tell you all that has happened since his last accounts, conceiving, I believe, that the cowardly tale will fall with much more propriety from a feminine than a masculine pen. Such, my dear, was the general idea of the firmness and spirit of the opposition, that many retired to their villages, in order to wait that event in safety, they believed it dangerous to stay too near. Mr. Stickler kept up the ball—he would teach the court its duty,
and

and constitute his conduct a lesson of instruction to princes, never to start in a land of freedom on tyrannic ground. I myself was so possessed with the importance of the crisis, that I kept our sweet Fanny up whole hours many preceeding nights, to watch for those signs in the heavens which portend the fall of kingdoms and the fate of empires. Fanny as well as myself looked in vain—the heavens did not trouble themselves about the matter, and we were obliged to descend from our altitudes, and explore the earth for information.

O! how I lament my want of powers to give my descriptions the glowing tints they merit — I besought your brother to make our house his home for a few days at least, and admonished Charles to take care and keep good hours, lest by being mistaken for some
more

more worthy personage he might, peradventure, have his brains beaten about his ears. My uncle's imagination was so heated on the occasion, that it suspended even his vanity, and we no more beheld him at the breakfast table in his morocco slippers, or his satin nightgown—judge then the height and depth of his apprehensions.

A rumour at length prevailed, that the sheriff had made his return in disfavour of Mr. Stickler—but that nevertheless he still lived.—I did not like this beginning instance of patriotic heroism, having prepared myself for great and marvellous revolutions.

This news was soon followed by another report, equally astonishing and incredible with the former:—Mr. Stickler had surrendered his person to the legal demands thereupon ;

upon; and had been suffered by his adherents, in the face of the noon-day-sun, to be conveyed to prison—the walls of which were nevertheless undemolished.

Fanny was now released from the hard duty our mutual fears had imposed upon her, and I fancy the whole metropolis followed our example—Not a *rational* patriot—mind the distinction, Sophia—but hung the head in confusion and disconsolation—their Goliath in durance, their champion inclosed within brick walls—whilst those lower orders of the community, who are accustomed to hope in spite of reason and probability, hovered round the cage of their favourite, and in token of their unexhausted zeal and unabating attachment hollowed till their lungs were weary, Stickler and Liberty, Liberty and Stickler for ever—And thus manfully has this
national

national struggle, this metropolitan contest ended; and for the sake of our own times, as well as for the sake of posterity, may it be enveloped by a cloud of everlasting oblivion. Charles attempts to be witty on the occasion, and protests that if half his fortune could purchase a sufficient quantity of that fabled water that procures forgetfulness, he would joyfully purchase it for the honour of his country in general, and the self-reconciliation of every particular individual.

So then, it was not enough, my dear, that we were a miserable, we must needs be a ridiculous people—and after all our clamouring, only fight the battles, aid the wishes, and exalt the triumph of our enemies.—O! it is a most mortifying æra, but must have its place in the annals of this disgraced kingdom, whilst the court enjoy
their

their unhopèd-for victory, and their intercourse of congratulation.

I am impatient to hear how this article of popular intelligence will strike on the sensorium of your uncle's brain—We will at length, Sophia, give him his due merits in the midst of his faults—though a partizan he is no fool, and though a man of very tolerable credulity, by no means capable of receiving glaring absurdities for gospel truths—though no bully he is a man of spirit, and though a castle-builder, has very tolerable ideas of common sense.

One of our visitors, a patriot indeed, intreats me not to be premature (a pretty phrase that, in my judgment) — Mr. Stickler, by his peaceable conformity to the laws of his country, means to do those laws honour, and that coun-

try the most essential service—But why, my good Sir, was it necessary, when he held our common laws in such proper reverence, why should he think it necessary for the great and fundamental law of our constitution to be violated, only to shew us what we knew before, that wicked men would not hesitate to use wicked means to effect those purposes, where unworthy ones should be found unavailing?—He turned hastily on his heel, accosted my mother on some frivolous subject, and left my *home* interrogatory wholly unanswered.

These are men, my dear—produce me, however, the instance when we women were found on such indefensible ground, or rendered such contemptible dupes to any the most favourite folly in our whole catalogue of follies or *femininities*.

England!

England! O unhappy England!—You must indulge me in an apostrophe, for your great minds always disburthen themselves on great occasions that way—and is it thus that thou hast been preserved, thus that thy honour and thy prosperity have been promoted?—But I will finish it, when the finishing stroke of all is struck—You will judge, I mean when the seat is actually occupied by either the sham or the real representative, for I think you will grant me, that that circumstance may be considered as the touchstone of all British courage and British liberty.

Your uncle's head has, I find, by your account of your rural transactions, some singular obligations to its hardness—and a fine hard-headed country gentleman I ever considered him. Charles is preparing to make his little tour,

so that you may prepare yourself for a speedy visit, and see that you receive him graciously—He will bear all our loves and kindest greetings in his hands; and be at once the representative of friendship, and the tenderest of friends.

The fop and my uncle have their cabals—nay, Harper seems to be a brother confederate—but butterflies and baubles, I hope, are the objects of them—However, be it as it may, I am sure I have the felicity of being out of the question; and, therefore, am not at all times their very humble servant. You know you have the reputation of being a pretty pen-woman—suppose then you sit down (duely elected) and deal us out an explanation of the cause and consequences of this patriotic *hiatus*—All, you are sensible, has been activity till now—when the wheels are
stopt

stopt—the mechanism run down—the machinery destroyed, and the prospect a chasm, a void—which nothing but your imagination can fill up—But I scorn to anticipate your wisdom, and will therefore only add, that

I am, &c.

E. SIDNEY.

L E T T E R XXXI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

HERE you have me again, Sophia, scribbling out my indignation on paper; but as it might have a less harmless operation, if vented through any other channel, you will, I am persuaded, both excuse and tolerate me. It is now, at last, reduced to a certainty, a melancholy certainty for this un-

fortunate kingdom, that the only hinge of government is the will of our courtiers, and that whatever they devise we must implicitly subscribe to.—I shall not however defile the whiteness of my paper, by the black intelligence I could give you; but having furnished you with this rule of judgment, leave you to make your own reflexions, comments, and lamentations. But there is no saying where or when the evil will end. The first city in the kingdom, that once equally great and acknowledged support of the crown, is now converted, or perhaps more properly perverted, into its footstool, and to be trod upon or spurned, as either humour may prevail, or occasion require.

That long enjoyed, bravely defended, and dearly purchased privilege, the privilege of petitioning, demonstrating, and keeping up an honest

honest intercourse with the throne, is now forfeited—Slaves and subjects—But the treatment, like the condition, ought to be widely different. A shew of regard, a parade of decency was, however, till now preserved; but the string has been fretted till it is at length broken—or, in other words, the neglect of the S——n having been once ascertained, the trouble of dissimbling ceases, and we may seek our remedy.

This, amongst numberless other equally valuable favours, we owe to Mr. Stickler.—Well may it indeed be observed, that injudicious friends are the worst of enemies—He ought not to have tried his strength at our expence; he ought not to have ventured out of his depth, if uncertain that his popularity would keep his chin above water, much less, by tying us to his toe, have

D 4

plunged.

plunged us irretrievably out of our happy element. Unavailing as these reflexions are, they have still their meaning—for do they not, Sophia, think you, give similar relief to the heart of an oppressed, a disappointed, and an undone wretch, as swearing does in the paroxysms of the gout, which you know is positively affirmed to be the case; in support I presume of the practice by the first men in the kingdom?

I now begin to think state quacks are to the full as dangerous as physical; the one contriving by his cruel and wicked skill to *lock up* the disease he is unable to cure; the other to lock up our senses, until their exertion becomes useless:—and as in the physical case, when the disease does break out again, it breaks out with redoubled vigour; so in the political, we only recover our faculties to be informed,

ed, that we have pursued shadows and neglected substances, and madly made bad still worse.

Charles set out within this hour for Piddleton; so that I suppose this letter will reach you in a happy tete-a-tete—I wish his journey may answer all my high-raised expectations of its motives and consequences, and we shall not only be restored to each other, but rise superior to all our mortifications.

You remember, no doubt, that when Charles embarked for India, he might have sat for a Hebe or a Ganymede; so pure was the complexion nature had given him, and so beautiful his unrazored cheek—but he is now, Sophia, no longer the youth of eighteen, and has, moreover, made a long voyage—yet, say the utmost you can of the sun's influence, it has only given him a tinge of the manly olive:

his eyes have their usual vivacity, his turn of countenance the same expression, and you are much too wise to be affected by a casualty that is merely skin deep.

But if he has lost the bloom, he retains all the *naïveté*, the modesty of youth; I mean of such youths as our historians give us an idea of—for with regard to modern times, he is an original, notwithstanding your brother is his co-temporary—for your brother you know, by his connexion with us lively girls, has been taught to look about him, whereas Charles departed this country from under the tuition of a most venerable and genuine principled man, and his manners are the manners of simplicity: and no wonder—for the worthy part of the Eastern Continent are, I find, the sons and daughters of demure civility.

If

If you should think me a little paradoxical on any subject, don't be surprized—Contradictions and problems are the humour of the times, and I am an apt scholar. My uncle and the fop (I detected them in the very fact) have written a letter, but the Lord knows to whom, the language and orthography of which I dare believe are exemplary—On my entrance, all was huddle and confusion—but I left them to their dirty work, if dirty it was, and humming a tune (for I always think it incumbent upon me to be lively on such occasions) retired.

Justice Woodcock attempted last night to shine on the subject of love; (what a cullender his heart must be, my dear, so repeatedly shot through and through as it has been!) all people in love deserved to be pitied.

D 6

I agreed

I agreed with him intirely, as great was their folly.—

That was by no means his meaning; and he thought a woman of honour and good nature could never, consistently with her character, refuse hearing the man who intreated no other indulgence than to be heard on a tender subject.

My mother looked grave, and seemed to give the nod of assent, whilst I laughed aloud at the dull eloquence of the pleader, and assured him that let which inspiring deity it might inspire him on that occasion, the god of love was not he.

It well becomes you, madam, to be both the subject and censurer of my remarks—

Me!—

Yes, you — a gentleman, who merits much better treatment, is shunned or ridiculed, whenever he tries to speak a few soft things in your ear; but if I was he. —

You

You would take a journey to London, and so cure your passion.

This was, I own, giving him too hard a blow, and I verily thought would have procured me one—but the old fellow referred himself for justice on the offender, by a thousand grimaces, to my mother, who lectured me to his satisfaction, and all was peace again.

The fop fidgeted so apparently on his seat, that I was half inclined to suspect him to be the person alluded to in this elaborate harangue; but it was so impossible for absurdity itself to be so absurd, that I renounced the idea.

Thus you see we have our civil wars and intestine broils—but you may rest assured, they will prove as harmless and as unprofitable as those in the political world.

Charles will tell you many pleasant things, which by their rapid
occurrence

occurrence have chased one another out of my memory—amongst the number of which is the actual flame my uncle has caught from the sweet Fanny's eyes—But such is my volatility, that the traces of every incident are faint on the tablet of my memory, except the substantial cares of my beloved Sophia, which I feel most sensibly—Yet, simpleton as I am, to write on in despite of the conviction that I shall not be read—for Mr. Effingham's conversation will have much superior charms for your ear, than my descriptions for your eye—So leaving you to love him,

I conclude, &c.

E. SIDNEY.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXII.

MISS FIELDING TO MISS SIDNEY.

ALAS! my dear girl, the happy chain of events you experience, leaves you wholly unprepared for the cross mortifying incidents in other families—Your favourite, Mr. Effingham, has, indeed, taken the trouble to call at our door; but, from finding it barred against him, was compelled to turn his chariot another way. This I was a spectator of from my chamber window, and could only wave my handkerchief to him in token of those good wishes it was denied me to speak, and of distress he had not the power to relieve.

My uncle's bell was immediately rung in a most furious manner, and I summoned to appear before him.

him.—Unconscious of guilt, I was fearless of his anger, but this last stroke of singularity sits heavy on my heart.

So, niece, I suppose you are privy to the affront intended me in the visit of that fopling—but the best of it is that he is galloped off, as wise as he galloped here, and will not, I hope, be over-forward to incur fresh indignities.

I am wholly at a loss, Sir, to comprehend how Mr. Effingham can have offended you, by paying you the compliment of calling upon you—

O ho! is it so? Then you and he, I suppose, were in this your first encounter to have talked matters over, and as you found your uncle capable or incapable of being choused, have concerted your future measures.

You are, Sir, I confess it, all-powerful where I am concerned, but you
cannot

cannot expect me to plead without knowing my indictment.

I never, niece, believed you would have added falsehood to disobedience—but retire—and when you have recollected yourself, and not till then, let us meet again—You may, perhaps, flatter yourself, that the provocations you give me will obtain you your liberty—but it is not so that I revenge myself—I will keep you here, however unworthy, during my pleasure, and as for your friend the old preacher, his steps shall be as circumscribed as your own, and I have given orders accordingly.

Ah! Sir, have pity on him, and persecute me as you please—His age ought to secure him from every violence, the uprightness of his intentions—

You please me beyond measure, by letting me see I have not
mistaken

mistaken my cue—This is most truly the plotter out-plotted—but away, your presence is odious to me.—

Dependence, O dependence, how severe thy fetters! for the morsel of bread, and the sheltering roof, I am compelled to submit to this grievous treatment—but my brother—I stand corrected, and will endure without repining. Poor Mr. Granville's misfortunes afflict me unspeakably—To redeem a brother from the horrors of a gaol, I remember he some years ago borrowed two hundred pounds from my uncle on his bond, which his slender income has not enabled him to discharge, and my uncle's benevolence gave him reason to hope would never be demanded, but then his soul must have been sold.—Presuming to speak such truth from the pulpit as became his character as a clergyman,

clergyman, and his duty as a friend of society, plunged him from the height of favour he had attained, and has now precipitated him into a prison.—The cruel news would break his daughter's heart, but you are all goodness, and I cannot fear for her, whilst under your benign influence. My jewels too, which I with so much difficulty persuaded the good man to keep for me—should they be seen what would be the consequence? I cannot claim them without dangerous explanations, nor he preserve my secret with safety, I fear, to his own person.—Yet let me recollect myself—it is no criminal act, for which he stands amenable; and therefore, as to what he may be possessed of, if they will only quietly pay themselves, and spare his sensibility, I shall thank, and I am sure Mr. Effingham will forgive,

give, them.—What dreadful suspense am I born to experience!

What, my dear Emma, can have occasioned this strange misapprehension of my uncle's respecting Mr. Effingham's visit?—Can he have learned he is my father's friend, and therefore sets his face against him? or is it possible that he can see him in the light of his favourite's rival?—I am lost in enquiries, and oppressed with apprehensions.—His conduct has cost me many tears, but he is not sufficiently tender to be melted by them; so that whatever relief they may prove to my bosom, they will never have a salutary effect on his.—Can I give you stronger proofs that it is in vain for me to think of better days? for my life henceforth, as hitherto, will be marked by disappointment. This is the advocate for liberty, the friend of mankind!—Poor Mr.
Gran-

Granville!—But I will dispatch the good-natured house-maid to learn his wants and his inconveniencies, and then run any risks rather than not be the instrument of his deliverance. Your letter had reached me about three hours before Mr. Effingham arrived—To have found my uncle in so propitious a humour, such a short time before—disposed not only to hear, but condescendingly to commend my brother's letter, and now to have him so rigidly unfriendly, is a trial of my temper it is almost unequal to—for the human heart cannot at all times sustain the same violence.

Can you expect me in all this mortification and perplexity to write smoothly of politics? But you do not expect it, and only ask me to give you the best account I am able of their state and operation in this quarter of the world—I must
 2 then

then tell you, my uncle persuades himself, that Mr. Stickler is only voluntarily obscured, in order to break out with redoubled lustre—His conduct he says is nobly judicious—the step the court has made necessary, requiring the most mature deliberation, and the utmost collected force—By his present proceeding, he gives time for his friends, as well in country as in town, to hold themselves in readiness to second his patriotic attacks—so that according to his account, it is not Mr. Stickler that *nods*, but we that dream. There is, indeed, one ray of hope that darts through the gloom, and that is, unless I am greatly mistaken, if he should find that Mr. Stickler has only brought us these lengths to shew us our own misery, and his vanity, self-interestedness or imbecility, that he will renounce all party connexions—Thus,
my

my dear, if the nation is undone, we have a chance to be saved. To convince you, however, how strongly my uncle is possessed with the idea of some national blow, he is endeavouring, I have discovered, to realize all his effects.—I commend, though I must conceive the precaution to be needless. I have been turning my whole thoughts, since my recent disappointment, to my favourite purpose of trying an experiment on the sensibility of G——e our king. To which end I have set forth, after my humble and introductory address, that my father has undone himself, by his adherence to the court interest, and his attachment to the Brunswick family—that by either place or pension, by lifting him above want, and preventing his becoming a discouraging example of neglected public virtue, his children will be rendered most

most happy—that as all the finer feelings are in a more particular manner imputed to the royal heart, and those tender characters of the husband and father experimentally understood by him, I have the most perfect confidence in his benevolent decision on the present point, for wiping off reproach from the paternal conduct, and the fear from the cheek of filial anxiety. — In words such or nearly such as these have I determined to cast myself at the feet of majesty; and as I have hit upon a means of having my petition secretly presented, I will not doubt of being raised to my heart's desire. Henry and my father must, however, be wholly ignorant of this transaction, unless success enables me to communicate, when, even according to the tenor of the world's conduct, they must applaud; for who condemns the successful action?

Thus,

Thus, though at a distance from the centre of business, and with my hands as it were tied behind me, I hope to be profitably employed in the cause of my distressed family, and shall prepare myself to receive their best congratulations.

Do not, however, suppose that I have formed any new connexions—The channel through which my petition is to pass to the throne, is of Mr. Granville's pointing out, and by his good-natured assistance.—I do not expect you to build much on the circumstance; but surely it is my duty to use every possible expedient in such a cause.

My uncle has introduced painters and white-washers into the family mansion—I presume to brush it up for my bridal reception—Poor man, how limited his view of

VOL. II. E things!

things ! for there is but one condition on which I will ever enter it again.

If variety could please, there is enough of it, surely, in my life; but Emma, it is merely variety of wretchedness—Yet, when I remember my petition, I recall the words, for so flatteringly does hope, in that respect, play about my heart, that if I cannot call myself happy, I am many removes from being your miserable, &c.

S. FIELDING.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

MISS SIDNEY TO MISS FIELDING.

C H A R L E S is returned, beyond measure chagrined and disappointed; nor are we able, one and all of us, to divine the cause—So far from ever giving your uncle the least offence, Effingham has always treated him with the highest respect—willing, perhaps, to have a friend in a corner, if he should stand in need of his assistance—What can then be in the wind?—It must be his friendly concern for your father, which he has rather too publicly and warmly expressed, that has done you this mutual injury; for I now know so much of his motives for visiting you, as to be able to pronounce, that, if he has been a loser, you have been

no gainer by your uncle's preposterous behaviour.

I am much distressed at poor Mr. Granville's situation, and shall impatiently long to know if the jewels have stood him in any stead; and let me tell you, Sophia, important as it may be for a woman of fortune to be adorned with these foreign gems, I cannot conceive their lustre could ever have been displayed to greater advantage, than in rescuing a worthy individual from the cruel hand of the oppressor. Your petition is by this time, according to your calculation, presented; may it have all its desired success! but I own to you I am quite an infidel on that ground—but we will leave it to its operation, and endeavour to bear the consequential event as becomes us. The prig, as you call Mr. Harper, shook his head, when I talked as
if

if Lord Ruleall's conduct was arraignable; and seemed to think the royal assent would never be granted to such a political heresy against the orthodox principles of his favourite—And can the king of Great-Britain, whose subjects are all beyond measure loyal and affectionate, think himself justified in having a favourite?—He does, Sophia, think himself justified — and, not content with enjoying him privately, holds him forth insultingly to the nation in that partial, that disgusting character, commanding every one that would recommend themselves to him to bow the knee to this high priest of tyranny.

It is, however, very extraordinary to me, who am apt to judge things according to their most striking circumstances, that the single article of conduct in this favourite, *viz.* exposing his sovereign to the dis-

esteem of his subjects, does not open the eyes of the former, to the mal-administration of the latter. In an arbitrary state, all that is wanted of the subject is obedience: but where the subject is taught to believe he is master of his own will, and either voluntarily devotes himself to the service of his prince, or, on good and sufficient provocations, voluntarily withdraws himself to a distance, it surely must be the interest of the prince, so to conduct himself as to *win* the heart he has no authority to compell to allegiance. The compact between the king of England and his people, as I understand it, runs thus—'The laws are our mutual rest, and bind us equally in one common interest—my violation of them would forfeit me my sovereignty, your's your life.—By them I am informed what I owe my country, whilst

whilst you are told thereby what is owing to me. If I defend the natural rights of my subjects, they will chearfully concur in the defence of my government; and if I promote their prosperity they will most readily grant me my necessary participation of it—but if by some fatal mistake we should either of us begin to pull different ways, their security and my safety, their provision and my support must be endangered—We are but so many links of one and the same chain, and if one is broken the whole must be destroyed.

Our present ministers, indeed, argue quite otherwise. It would be in vain, say they, to attempt robbing a brave people of favorite sounds, with which they amuse themselves—their rights and their powers, their claims and their privileges—Let them then be retained,

but by dint of finesse let them be rendered merely empty titles and airy illusions in this generation, and we may depend upon it, that in the succeeding one they will be finally extinguished. The infatuation of the public is at present such, that like children, provided the bauble retains its gilding, they will never enquire into its intrinsic value; though men of spirit, sense, and an exemption from their prejudices, will see them in their true light, and scorn to adopt words that have no longer any meaning.—But when opposition would be useless, it is easily over-ruled.

We see what lengths the patriots have been able to lead them, in pursuit of meteors; let us then take care to rise, as rise we must, if we have the least portion of wisdom, by the same gradations their star declines—for when the
expec-

expectations are disappointed, and the spirits exhausted, the mind is in an apt state to accede to any condition.

When oppositions were formidable in England, England could boast of formidable men—men who, instead of magnifying trifles into grievances, took their stand on firm ground, and sustained the shock of every incident unmoved. Fluctuation is the bane of opposition—firmness its only basis.—We trembled till we were well informed of the complexion of our opponents; but now much rather consider them as fools than impediments, fellow labourers than adverse partisans.

Persons, not things, are indeed, my dear Sophia, the fundamentals of the present contentions. Lord Ruleall is the object of popular envy, Mr. Stickler of court aver-

sion; and so the poor deluded people, when they think they are opposing the measures, are only opposing the man, and the S—n, whilst he believes he is keeping up his own dignity, is only the champion of his favourite's spleen and resentment,—And is the evil wholly without remedy?—Will not the genius of this once happy isle whisper to its inhabitants the folly of their conduct; and some pitying angel call back the S—n to reason and to justice?

But lest the press, that powerful engine in skilfull hands, should be happily played off, and the king and the people brought to understand one another, it is wholly engrossed by the fools and knaves of society.—The eyes of the subject are turned upon the king, and of the king upon Mr. Stickler, whilst the wicked ones on both sides pass unnoticed,

unnoticed, and the cause is suspended, and the consequences wholly unfeared.

If I were to write whole years, however, on the subject, I should leave it unexhausted—it is so replete with all that can alarm, interest, astonish and puzzle a reflecting observer.

Poor injured Mr. Granville!—But be assured, Sophia, the melancholy tidings shall never, if I can prevent it, wound his daughter's heart, who is at present, if appearances may be trusted, in every respect but the article of fortune, as happy as she deserves—nor does it to me seem impossible that a tide of unlooked-for prosperity may break in upon her. Mr. Broughton, your brother's patron, as he styles him, is certainly struck with her person, and charmed with her character. So elegantly bred, yet so condescend-

ing—so amazingly beautiful, yet so unassuming—so—but I have not words to characterize his feelings, and must refer you to his future conduct. Fanny begs leave to call me light-headed, whenever I touch upon this subject—but she cannot reason me out of the evidence of my own senses, either with respect to her merits, or Mr. Broughton's admiration.

Your bold candidate, the now reverend Mr. Harper, gives your father strong hopes that something will yet be done for him.—I am not, I confess, much pleased with his mode of behaviour, nor can I too implicitly depend on the truth of his reports, but am willing to temporise, so long as temporizing may be useful. He speaks in praise of your person, but, if I mistake not, rather dreads than admires your understanding—Thus little

the souls are ever over-awed by great ones, and we can only join hands with equality.

You need not doubt but your father's brother's friend will concur with your wishes of re-union, the moment a re-union is practicable—but as you will not be content to come to London on other terms than pitching your tent on a melancholy spot, it cannot be immediately effected. The scanty pittance your brother is master of, and the absolute distress of your father's circumstances, together with the disagreeable state of both their minds, from the uncertainty of their prospects, would give you a very uncomfortable home for some little time to come. Your uncle, it is true, carries it with a very high hand, but nature, principle, pride, may at length produce a favourable turn, and that too when you
least

least expect it—His fortune is much too large for him to stand excused, even to his own heart, in not making a provision for you, and the world's dread opinion must infallibly be an additional security.—Yet wretch that I am! to forget you are now an actual prisoner, in the house you fled to as an asylum, and that if things were ever so propitious, you could not instantaneously deliver yourself.

Your relations are beyond measure hard to deal with; your brother from genuine delicacy, your father from a natural haughtiness of disposition, despising every accommodation that their own industry or their claim to a recompence does not intitle them to. Henry visits me seldomer than usual, and when he does come, his downcast eyes and respectful address plainly tell me the despondence of his heart.

heart. You never in your life heard of such a pair of true lovers—the man all coldness, and the woman all condescension—but the cause sanctifies the effect, and I would do every thing but ask him to receive my hand to keep up his spirits, and soften his mortifications. My mother takes all opportunities to do honour to her daughter's choice: Mr. Fielding is her most welcome visitant; and Mr. Fielding is evermore treated with a difference that no other person experiences—It is the highest obligation she could confer upon me, and shall be indelibly engraved on a grateful heart.

Mr. Harper has not all the insignificancy I imagined: a right honourable character, on his interest, and by his representation of your father's circumstances, is to visit us tomorrow—Even I myself begin

begin to hope now, and am reconciled to this late object of my shyness and suspicion. He has too, it seems, mentioned Mr. Granville, and, if he does not talk too fast, will be the means of obtaining him a much more eligible situation than your uncle's malice thrust him out of.—The article of the jail has not yet transpired, for fear it should be conveyed by some officious friend to his unapprehensive daughter, but that, instead of reflecting dishonour upon his character, will only prove a spur to the peer's benevolence.—I wish the interview was over; and that I may not punish when I would inform, I will not conclude this letter until it is over—and in the mean time transcribe you two epistles, necessary for your perusal—but they shall be self-announced, and are as follows:

MR.

MR. EFFINGHAM TO MR. FIELDING.

“ S I R,

“ G I V E me leave to ask you, as from one gentleman to another, wherein I could deserve the reception I last week met with, when I did myself the honour to call at your house. My situation in life gave me no reason to apprehend I should find myself an exceptionable visitant; and the respect I have ever entertained for your person, and in every possible instance demonstrated, would not suffer me to conceive I should find myself an unacceptable one. To shut your door, therefore, against me, and refuse hearing what I had to offer on the occasion, was sure as unjustifiable as it was extraordinary.—This is however a letter of explanation, not complaint, and I shall

shall wave every farther notice of this particular.

“ Since my return from India, an opportunity has offered of becoming your neighbour—The manor of S—— is to be sold by private contract, and I am in treaty for its purchase. I need not inform you, that from its appurtenances and appendages, I should acquire what is called the influence of many votes; but as I hold it unfair to use other methods than informing the ignorance or assisting the judgment of the electors, I could not make an absolute tender of what I should nevertheless endeavour to direct to its proper object.

“ Liberty, Sir, has charms for me, though I wish always to keep my character an undecided one—because when those people who are distinguished by the name of anti-patriots act wisely, I must approve,
and

and as far as that wise determination operates, join hands with them.

“It was, Sir, my desire to converse, to consult with you on this subject—Our families have long been on a friendly footing—and I will confess to you, that could my fortune have recommended me to your favour, my tenderest affiduities to the acceptance of your niece, I should have exulted in an alliance with Mr. Fielding.

“But as years have passed since I was connected with you, and your prudence may require testimonials of my reputation and finances, I would beg leave to refer you to such respectable persons as have had, as it were, the superintendency of my actions, &c. for satisfaction in those particulars. I will only add, that notwithstanding I am returned

turned mortified and disconcerted to London, if I receive encouragement, it shall not be long before you behold me again at your door, to renew our acquaintance, and, if possible, engage your approbation.

“ I am, &c.

“ C. EFFINGHAM.”

MR. FIELDING TO MR. EFFINGHAM.

“ SIR,

“ YOU, with your great plausibility, your deep finesse, I most earnestly intreat to keep your distance. The party principles of your family I am not, at this day, to learn—Your grandfather (mark that) voted plump with the court. You must not, there-

therefore, expect to catch old birds with chaff, or insinuate yourself into my house, under the idle pretences set forth in your letter. As for my niece, I will confess to you, I once thought very highly of both her understanding and her heart—so I did of her brother's—But having received proof that I was duped in the first respect, I am prepared for disappointment in the second, with this reserve, *Mr. General Undertaker*, that she shall not be wittingly conveyed from under my protection.

“ I therefore again forbid your visits at my house; and as for the puppy, the apostate I once called my nephew, if he, for the sake of a provision, chooses to take a *ready* relation of your's, his meanness and illiberality of soul be on his head—And so I leave him to the fruits of his own degeneracy and folly.

“ If you had the whole Indies, instead of a small portion of its wealth, at your command, you should never have my vote to become my relation. The correspondence, you well know, is as unfought for, on my part, as it is repugnant to my inclination: you cannot then expect me to be over civil in subscribing myself,

“ Your’s, &c.

“ T. FIELDING.”

There is a tender relation, and a well-bred gentleman for you!—But take my word for it, these are only little rubs that will so much the more endear your future felicity, and let them affect you accordingly—And so, my dear, for the present adieu.

The interview is passed, and heaven alone can tell to what useful
2 purpose.

purpose. My Lord ——— was exceedingly polite, but I cannot say I thought him so explicit as he ought to have been: his promises and his professions were general, and the when and the where wholly omitted. He however observed, that as Mr. Fielding had incurred Lord Ruleall's displeasure, things must be conducted with a very nice hand, no one person, of whatever rank, choosing to give him offence.

Having, as he I suppose conceived, talked a sufficient time on your father's affairs, he mentioned Mr. Granville, and not without a few rhetorical flourishes, lamented that a man of his profession and character should be sunk in oblivion, and then asked if he could with propriety be indulged with a sight of the young lady. This request seemed to overwhelm us all with confusion—For my part I was shocked at
the

the very idea of making a gentlewoman a raree-show—and somewhat recovering myself, observed that I feared I could not contrive to oblige his Lordship, without offending against the laws of good-nature and hospitality—for that as Fanny Granville was not upon the footing in our family to be set down with his Lordship, neither was she on the footing to be turned into a room as a mere messenger—that she had great merit and great sensibility, and I thought the one could never be too much respected for the sake of the other.

The peer was abashed—but, smiling it off, said he was sorry for the lady's sake, that his request was considered an improper one—but as nothing enabled a man to plead a cause so successfully as perfectly understanding all its merits, he owned, by taking the young lady's personalities
into

into the account, he had thought to have heightened the pathos of his arguments. That nothing might be wanting to promote the interest of this equally lovely and deserving creature, I, after a moment's pause, proposed that I would retire, and, under the pretence of telling her what had passed in her father's favour, keep her in chat till his Lordship took his leave, when, by way of paying his compliments to me, the parlour door should be opened where we were, and Miss Granville announced to him, as the clergyman's daughter whose interest he had so generously adopted.

This little scheme was carried into execution—He gazed upon her in a very bold, but at the same time, in a very flattering manner—told my brother and cousin she was an angel, and seemed to carry her image away with him, deeply

impressed on his heart. If it assists her father's purposes, I shall applaud my wisdom on the occasion: Fanny, however, takes a very certain method not to be disappointed; for she tells me she shall not form a single expectation. This advantage must accrue to your family, that the petition you have great reason to think is already presented, will be supported by this nobleman; and such must be our opinion of the sovereign, that he has all the dispositions towards benevolence, but that he too implicitly depends upon the reports of his courtiers, not to have them frequently perverted, checked, and improperly exerted. I verily believe that your father is more anxious respecting his success, in order to secure his mind from the consciousness of his unnatural brother's triumph, than from any other consideration whatsoever; nor can I blame him for a species of pride

pride I feel is similar to my own nature—with this difference, that I think it would have operated so far in the prudential way, as to have saved me from falling into the inconveniences he experiences—Yet, Sophia, we are all of us excellent managers, able politicians, and valiant foldiers, by our own fire-sides, though it is very probable we should make a miserable figure in every one of those characters, if called into action.—I leave you to make the application in your father's defence, and to reap the benefit of the reflection in your own conduct.

And am, &c.

E. SIDNEY.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

GOOD heavens! my dear Sophia, what a world is this we live in?—Avarice is a passion I can in some degree enter into, because I see no difference between a man's loving to tell over his guineas, or the other delights of the sex, as horses, pictures, &c. Vanity too has its gratification; it puts us in good humour with ourselves and all around us; but malice is surely capable alone of soothing the fiend-like heart.

My mother and I had been paying a few morning visits, and were returned home to dress, and make ourselves fit to receive your father, brother, and Mr. Harper at dinner, when on entering the house I perceived something more than common was the matter. I stopped one moment,

and hearing a confused murmur of voices, darted as it were into the apartment from whence the sound proceeded, and what should I behold but our dear Fanny in a swoon, supported by one of the female servants, Mr. Harper chafing her temples with hartshorn, and a letter, which I naturally enough concluded the cause of the poor girl's disorder, lying upon the table. I hastily caught it up, and found it contained a circumstantial account of Mr. Granville's persecution; together with a strong intimation, that in consequence of many valuable things found in his possession, and of which he refused to give the least account, he seemed to be in the train of a criminal indictment. I tore the letter in pieces, and I believe behaved not unlike a madwoman, sent instantly for a surgeon, and had my poor sweet girl taken proper care of; who soon recovered her

senses, but wept as if her heart would break. I besought her to be composed—told her nothing but the pen of malice, though I could by no means see to what purpose, could have produced such an epistle; that there was, indeed, no denying that her father was in custody; but that, so far from being under the predicament there represented, not the shadow of suspicion respecting Miss Fielding's jewels, which she had troubled him to keep for her, had fallen upon him—That Miss Fielding sent to him every day, and that Mr. Effingham proposed going down, releasing him, and taking him under his protection, until it should be in his power to obtain a presentation for him, that would render his circumstances quite easy.

She listened to me with the utmost attention, and finding I had done speaking, said, you would not deceive me, madam, if you knew of
how

how much consequence it is to me to know the truth, however melancholy, of my father's situation—Was he to die, and I not present, I think nothing would be able to reconcile me to life, and therefore must intreat that you will dispense with my attendance for some little time, and permit me to leave town immediately; I must support him under his misfortune, or my peace of mind will be lost for ever.—Perceiving it was in vain to reason with her, so long as the violent agitation of her spirits continued, I promised to perform whatever she demanded, and ordering her room to be kept quiet, retired.

Your brother, father, Mr. Effingham, and Mr. Harper, all appeared much affected by the account I gave of Fanny's indisposition; but there is, my dear, a wide difference between humanity and love: Mr. Broughton remained speechless during the whole

dinner-time, eat not a single morsel, and retired the first moment he could with propriety, in order to grieve at leisure.—Charles, the good, the generous Charles, enquired what could be done—the sum, he said, was not worth mentioning, and it was paying a poor compliment to such a character as Mr. Granville, to be ready to advance it for his accommodation—but he was at a loss for a mode of conveyance, and a somebody to prevail upon him to quit the village and conduct him to a happy distance from his enemies.

My uncle, provident soul! observed, that two hundred pounds, with all the other expences, was a large sum: and that, as Mr. Granville had no preferment, nor with the utmost interest might obtain any for some time; and as he had moreover undergone the disgrace of being committed to prison, and no doubt was
become

become reconciled to what was called its horrors, would it not be better to wait and see if the old patriot would relent or not, before any other steps were taken?

Ah! my dear Sir, said I, two hundred pounds is an immense sum when employed to release a worthy man from prison, though five hundred has to my knowledge been paid with pleasure.—My uncle coloured, my mother frowned, your brother was tenderly alarmed, and Mr. Harper and your father exchanged a significant look.

It is amazing, daughter—

No indeed, mamma, it is only blameable—and yet should we not, according to the good Scripture admonition, be more diligent to remove the beam out of our own eye; than busy ourselves so much about the mote in the eye of our neighbour?

F 5 Mr.

Mr. Harper observed, that was not the business in question; Miss Granville was unhappy, Mr. Granville in durance, and the ways and means to relieve both the one and the other were worthy the deliberation of that respectable company.

My uncle muttered somewhat about self-importance—but did not chuse to be heard too plainly.

My grandmother at length broke silence—Though unable, said she, to see Miss Granville in the amiable light she appears to others, yet I know enough of her merits to interest myself in her happiness; and as it is my opinion that on this occasion the risk can be small, the prospect of repayment very promising, my granddaughter, as she calls herself her friend, ought to prove herself such, and the sum required is very much at her service. Never did my heart feel so agreeable a surprize—nor was

I able to resist the grateful impulse—but jumping up before all the company, and overturning a little temporary side-board that stood in my way, thanked her in such a manner, as was I believe perfectly agreeable to her. Charles congratulated me upon my felicity.—Your brother—but I could guess his feelings—and the Justice, incapable of participating a joy he could not understand, retired, and I would, notwithstanding my mother's good-natured rebukes, and did raise a laugh at his expence. I now thought of visiting the dear girl, in order to give her an account of the affair; but when I reached her apartment, which I did with the utmost caution, for fear of disturbing her, what should I over-hear but my uncle Justice Woodcock intreating the fair Rosetta to let him have the honour of delivering her father; in return for which glorious service he

only asked her love.—He shrunk at my approach, called me his evil genius, and charged me with taking a malicious pleasure in counter-acting all his wishes and intentions. I would have adverted to his narrow observation; but he interrupted me with assuring me, that it was only a piece of finesse to prevent that action in another, which he wished to perform himself.—I begged him to recollect that Fanny's spirits could ill bear our altercation, and that, as he had invaded my province, I thought myself justified in telling him, that he could not do a wiser thing than after the example of the court, when no longer able to hold an office, to resign; and was so wicked as to add, that I should be as proud of my young aunt as he could be of his young wife, and was impatient to pay my dutiful respects to her without witnesses.—Suffice it to say, that
at

at length he withdrew, inveighing bitterly against your well-intending friend.

I then sat down by the lovely girl, but found it somewhat awkward to tell the tale of my own generous resolves — I however insisted upon it, that Mr. Granville would soon be in a condition to repay me, and that I could never behold your face unless I was accepted as her father's bondswoman—advised that he should instantly, on obtaining his enlargement, set off for our house in the country, where he could wait our return with convenience and safety.

She sighed and shook her head—
I must see him, madam—all this generosity is insufficient to quiet my alarms; I cannot live if I am not permitted to return to him.

I used

I used every possible argument to convince her she was wrong, but had so little success, that when I left her, it was only in a state of resignation—the resignation that results from cruel necessity.

On my entering the dining-room, I found the company augmented by the return of Mr. Broughton, and the arrival of the fop, to whom I suppose my uncle was relating my ill behaviour, for the eye of reference was frequently glanced upon me—I nevertheless held up my head as a tacit justification of all I had done; and Mr. Broughton collecting the most agreeable information from my features respecting Fanny's health, he brightened up and became conversible. But notwithstanding the satisfaction obtained from my countenance, the lover's heart was not properly in tune, and he declined attending

us

TO MISS FIELDING.

111

us according to pre-engagement to a concert.—Yes, Sophia, I am robbing all my good friends of the moments I thus dedicate to you, but the labours of the toilet are soon dispatched by me, and—as I am alive, a summons—I come, I come.

Adieu, &c.

E. SIDNEY.

L E T.

LETTER XXXV.

MR. FIELDING TO MISS FIELDING.

SELF reproach and parental anxiety, those feelings which of all others appeared least to discompose the mind of our father, bear at length so forcibly upon it as to threaten his dissolution.

He is indeed, my dear Sophia, very ill, and seems to resolve not to take comfort, unless the court do him what he calls justice. But the principles by which the court govern themselves are literally these—The man who has for years distinguished himself in our service, and for years been the trumpeter of our merits, cannot on any provocations assume an opposite character, without impeaching his judgment and proving the instability of

of his attachments—Our enemies it is wisdom to buy, but our friends will either be firm in our cause, from motives of interest, or silent sufferers, from motives of pride. When we have a bad man to deal with there is much to fear, and it is judicious to retain him at any price; but a good man will remain a good man, whether at court or in retirement, out of respect to himself, however altered his opinion of us or our measures.—As this is undeniably the court creed, we cannot wonder at their conduct, or be unprepared for our father's falling an additional victim to their perfidy and ingratitude.

If it had not been for the lucky hit of obtaining my little appointment, there is no looking to the extent of the misery that must have awaited us—The attendance is trifling, and the business mechanically performed

performed. I therefore consider it in the light of an absolute sine-cure.

I pass whole evenings in enquiries into every honest means of rising in foreign countries; for in England, as I have been educated, it is impossible to throw myself into the necessary track—You must not let any womanly fears set you in array against this only promising avenue—The seas have no doubt their dangers, and change of climate some trials for the constitution—but you are wise enough to know, that the loss of friends is no uncommon disaster in England; and pious enough to confess that Providence may be trusted all the world over. Having opened my heart thus far, I will communicate my whole scheme.

In proportion as I find Miss Sidney and her mother generous, I must

must conceive it incumbent upon me to save them from the world's ridicule—there then is nothing left for me to do, but to endeavour by successful industry to attain to equality.

Her greatness of mind, I am satisfied, might be relied on; but I must, as well for her sake as my own, consult my feelings. Miss Sidney will wait the improvement of my circumstances, I am certain, with pleasure: but how shall I reconcile her to a separation that is death to my own heart? Besides, it strikes me, that to make her acquainted with my design, would appear as if I wished its execution prevented—You, my dear sister, must therefore break the matter to her with due preparation, when I have torn myself from my country without bidding her adieu.

My

My father may live comfortably, though privately, on my little stipend, until it is happily in my power to augment his income; and it would be my idea, that if my uncle's displeasure is unconquerable, it would be best for you to share my father's pittance, and by your good management beat it as wide as possible. But, Sophia, tho' I have this pride (if it can be called by that name) with respect to myself, from thinking it an essential part of the masculine character, I by no means think an opposite conduct in a young woman of honour, education, family, and the personalities you can boast, degrading—Because, my dear, such are the customs of society, that the husband's consequence dignifies the wife; but let the wife be the first woman in the kingdom, yet will the husband continue the same little

the fellow as before their union. I cannot help flattering myself, Mr. Effingham has the most generous wishes towards you—Your father's misfortunes cannot lessen you in the world's opinion, and it would therefore be my advice, that on proper solicitation your hand should not be withheld from a man who I am persuaded knows its value.

Mr. Effingham's connexions in India were capital, and his friendship for me is almost unexampled; I think then I may safely rely on his recommendations, and it must be my care to improve them to advantage. However, do not fail to observe that I mention this as my dernier resort, for should my uncle relent and fulfill his repeated promises of dividing his riches between us, England and your brother will never separate. My patron, Mr. Broughton, is much in my interest,
and

and above all things persuades me never to give myself to the court. —Depend upon it, says he, they will contrive to dupe you, as they have duped your father, notwithstanding he is from his age and experience able to make so much stronger a defence; and your unsuspecting honesty will be your undoing.

Miss Sidney takes so friendly a part in our concerns, that I am shocked to think the tax we are upon her deserved tranquillity, and it necessarily follows that we owe her all possible consideration.—Her cousin is affectionately regarded by her; you are the friend of her heart, and I can readily conceive what pleasure it would give her to see you united. From a consciousness of my determination, and the little prospect there is of my having it in my power to renounce it, whilst
she

she is exercising her charming vivacity for my entertainment, a profound sigh will escape me, and discover much more of my private feelings than I wish should transpire. I never was good at dissimbling, and as for your direct falsehoods, I never practise them—I am therefore reduced to the necessity of begging her to spare me, nor enquire into resolutions which must be premature, as their confirmation depends wholly on circumstances—She yields, though with visible reluctance, to these gentle evasions of a subject she perceives is so painful to me.

Mr. Broughton is so struck with the beauty of Miss Granville's person and manners, and so charmed with the character of her father, that I am persuaded it is his intention to solicit her hand so soon as he can do it with propriety—but a sort of entanglement, a match planned

planned by his and the lady's father, without the young people's having ever seen one another, remains to be abjured before he can follow the dictates of what is so plainly his inclination. Miss Granville is however so unhappy about her father, that it is distressing to see her; and I really think, as a post-chaise is an easy mode of conveyance, and short stages a prevention of fatigue, that Mr. Granville could not do better than come up to London in the first instance—a piece of information I wish you could contrive to give him for the general happiness of your friends, amongst the number of which you will do me the justice to arrange me, for we know it is possible for relations to act a very opposite character, though you and I shall, I fancy, continue exceptions to that rule.

I am, &c.

H. FIELDING.

LETTER XXXVI.

MISS FIELDING TO MISS SIDNEY.

THE two inclosed letters reached me this morning; you will judge my indignation and surprize by your own feelings.—It is in vain, you see, that I pursue—success is much too fleet for me to overtake it; and I have only to learn the hard lesson of resignation.

TO MISS FIELDING.

“ Madam,

“ I AM commanded to inform you, that though it is impossible to serve your father according to the mode your experience and filial affection would dictate, yet it is still in your power to raise him above his present difficulties, by only acting like a woman of that

VOL. II.

G

under-

understanding and fine breeding your petition bespeaks you, and which has obtained you a friend in Lord S——. The sovereign not having leisure to peruse the innumerable petitions daily presented, certain lords, that no real grievance may be unredressed, are appointed to run them over, and make due reports to the ear of royalty.

“I am sorry to add, that when my lord, whose generous heart was melted to your purpose, by the force of your genuine eloquence, and the masterly picture you had drawn of a deserving daughter, hinted the tenor of your petition, (as he was then in office) he was forbid to proceed; and the great personage instantly retired to unbend himself in a social tete-a-tete with the object of your impeachment and resentment. Harper, said his lordship, on his return home,
I am

I am chagrined by the very event I expected—Miss Fielding's petition is rejected—it were as safe to attack the master himself, as the servant of his confidence and affection—But tell me, does her person and her pen correspond? Is her form as lovely as her language is expressive?—I bore faithful testimony, and was, madam, commissioned to acquaint you, that nothing more is necessary to save, to enrich your family, than prevailing upon the person you have the power to command, *viz.* Miss Granville, to present herself, and back your petition with her eloquence—and Lord S—— will be propitious.

“My lord, though touched by the share you have in your father's misfortunes, maintains the justice of them, in consequence of breaking hands with such a man as Lord Ruleall; and will, nay can

alone undertake to repair them, at the intercession of one that he says ought never to plead in vain. As to a place, you must not think of it, because it would be a palpable affront to Lord Ruleall—A pension, however, may be winked at—Your private things are seldom permitted to be serious ones, and it cannot be denied that your men in high office are nearly under the same predicament with the French author's doctors—Do you wink at my sena, and I'll take no notice of your rhubarb.—I need not, however, observe that this is between ourselves; or that should my lord's proposal be agreeable, the determination of your wishes rests wholly on your own speedy application to your fair ambassadress to begin the treaty—An audience will be granted her whenever demanded.

"I am, madam,

"Your humble servant,

"T. HARPER."

TO MISS SIDNEY. 125

So much, my dear Emma, for my hopes and the merits of my honest endeavours—But let us turn from this picture of baseness and cruelty, and view mankind in the glorious light heaven itself is pleased to behold the creature of its creation.

TO MISS FIELDING.

“ Madam,

“ WITH a trembling hand, and an anxiously beating heart, I am at length set down to intreat a moment’s attention. You cannot be uninformed of my journey to your uncle’s, for you beheld and apparently pitied my disgraceful reception—But it was not the reception that distressed me; it was the cruel necessity I was under of returning without speaking my

G 3

humble

humble purpose, and my fear for your consequential treatment.

“ That I loved you before I quitted England, you had a thousand striking testimonies—From my infancy you was dear to me, and it was merely from the flattering hope of prevailing on you to honour me with your hand that I am indebted for my present affluence.

“ My disposition is naturally unassuming—the small inheritance of my father would have bounded my ambition, if to provide for you in a suitable manner to your merits had not prompted me to accept the invitation of a generous relation, to come over and succeed him in all his possessions. I have shewn you, madam, that could I have obtained you by any other means, I would not have taken this method—but are you not a prisoner in the house of (pardon me, madam) an unfeeling and hasty man? and what schemes

schemes he may be capable of forming for strengthening his connexions, or extending his interests by your mortification, it is impossible to say—and I conceive I may presume to think hardly of his principles, who can suffer an only brother and an unoffending nephew to languish in obscurity, because they follow his example, and dare to have a choice of their own. My aunt and cousin would unspeakably rejoice in my obtaining the honour of protecting you: their house would be your's, and I immediately retire from under its roof, where I have for these few days taken up my residence, that every thing might be conducted agreeably to your nice ideas of propriety. But, madam, I must not deceive you; your father is resolved to sacrifice you to your brother's supposed interest, and has refused his consent to an union that would open your prison doors, lest your uncle,

who never will benefit his relations whilst living, should plead your quitting him, though so barbarously treated, and so dangerously situated, as an excuse for robbing them at his death. But this, of all others, ought not to be a consideration—you have fortune sufficient to make your brother ample amends for such ideal losses; for I again solemnly protest, that every shilling I obtained by my East-India voyage was obtained in your name, and for your use; and I am merely and *bona fide* your steward.

“ This was a truth of which I intended to make your uncle sensible, if I could have obtained an audience; and assured him as I now do you, that unless you will participate it, I will renounce it for my fortune.

“ Our union should be kept secret so long as it might be your desire; but if you do not soon determine, by making me the happiest man on earth,
to

to give me the authority of a relation with your brother, in restraining his schemes and assisting his undertakings, you will be deprived of that invaluable blessing, and all his friends will look up to you with accusation.

“I need not, madam, explain that this is an appeal to your heart, in the double sense of the word—for so well do I know how minds like your’s distinguish, that I should assume so much consequence to myself, as to believe the brother and the lover equally indebted to your tender consideration.

“I am, madam, &c.

“C. EFFINGHAM.”

So my dear, you see, having had it pretty roundly hinted to me that if I will become a procurefs my father shall have justice done him, I am so-

licited generously to consent to make myself happy. But for the means—an elopement—and can so discreet a damsel as your friend consent to elope?—The purpose you will tell me is honourable, but the precedent is nevertheless dangerous; and when we are seeking excuse for our own conduct in that of our neighbour, we are mighty apt to take things as we find they answer our occasions, without too critical an enquiry into their merits.

On this view of the affair it is pretty clear that, for my own credit and from a due regard to example, the step is ineligible.

But my brother's safety, my lover's felicity, my own deliverance from bondage—Ah, Emma! all that is merely the voice of love; but let us sacrifice so far as just to hear what reason says on the subject.—It must be impossible but I have weathered the violence

lence of the storm, and that too unsupported by a prospect of a safe harbour—I have refused pomp and splendor with a patriot infamy, and a pension from a courtier: my stability and my integrity must therefore be indubitable. To fly now would be to tarnish all my well earned laurels, by tacitly confessing that I fear myself. Wonder not, then, that I am for avoiding repentance, and resolve to wait a little longer.

But, to be serious, I own my father's behaviour hurts me more on this occasion, than any other I have yet experienced. I have patiently endured, so long as patient endurance can be a virtue; and I should much rather therefore have conceived that he would have rejoiced in so honourable, so happy a means of delivering me, as bestowing me on a worthy and affluent young man.—This is, nevertheless, my answer to Mr. Effingham.

Tell him, Emma, in the most agreeable terms you — yes, even you—are capable of—that I have a due sense of the high compliment he pays me: but, that in order to be more worthy of it than any other step could render me, I must intreat that we may meet in the due course of things, when I will thank him, if possible, as I ought; and, if possible, answer all his obliging expectations.

My father too, I hope, will not only be consenting, but see the obligations he must incur by such a match for his daughter, whose best merits are, my dear girl, of the negative kind—She did not oppose the will of her relations—she did not depart from her integrity—But as it is obvious what a wretch she must have been deemed if distinguished by an opposite conduct, it must be plain how little applause

TO MISS SIDNEY.

133

plause she is intitled to for persevering
in the right track.

I am, my dear, &c.

S. FIELDING.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

MISS SIDNEY TO MISS FIELDING.

WRETCHES! unpardonable
wretches!—But I will now tell
you all—and teach you, instead of
judging of mankind by your own
amiable heart, to seek a standard of
a very opposite nature to ascertain
their merits.—On our return from the
concert I mentioned in my last, my
first care was to visit my Fanny—
Conceive then my astonishment, my
distress, when I found her apartment
empty, and no creature in the family
able to give me an account of the
cause or meaning of her absence. My
mother

mother expressed the tenderest concern for her safety; your brother, your father lamented; the fop stared, and my uncle was outrageous—Still not a trace was to be obtained, till one of the men informed me that he had called her a coach, into which she got and drove away, he was unable to say where.

However, after many hours spent in anxiety, in which your brother and my mother had the humanity to sympathise, the house-maid sent me in a letter, which she found on my toilet, containing the following words:

TO MISS SIDNEY.

“ Dear madam,

“ Pardon, I beseech you, the only act of disobedience, misfortune or temptation could have betrayed me to commit—My father has been to me a very tender, and a very endearing
ing

ing relation—I left him in order to relieve him—I fly to him in hopes of supporting him—Do but conceive the anguish of a heart that apprehends the loss of all that is most valuable, and could not sustain its self-reproaches, where the saving and serving a persecuted father was the question, without being mortally wounded.

“ My best thanks await you for all the kindness I have experienced at your hands, and though it should be possible for you to hold me inexcusable for withdrawing myself clandestinely from your protection, yet shall my gratitude be unextinguished, and my prayers unceasing for your felicity—and I trust you will sooner or later recollect that if I had not been your unhappy, I should never have been your offending

“ Humble servant,

“ F. GRANVILLE.”

This

This letter, you may imagine, was some consolation; but weak and ill as I left her, I shuddered to think how unequal she would find herself to the fatigues of a long journey, and the inclemency of the night air—I however began to resolve in my mind, how many young and delicate damsels had braved much greater dangers, and defied much greater difficulties, in a less worthy cause; for do but consider the difference between eloping from, and eloping to a fond and valuable father; so that, submitting her to the care of every benevolent angel, I was in hopes to have been tolerably composed until it was possible to hear of her safe arrival at Piddleton.

But when I endeavoured to compose myself to sleep, my horrors were unspeakable—so lovely a creature in the power of nobody could tell who—almost penniless, for she declined all offers

offers of pecuniary accommodation; because, whilst under my roof, she insisted upon it she could never have occasion for money, or that if she had, she would apply to me—Ill, apprehensive—but I can give you no idea of my feelings.—The morning at length came, and I was set down to make you acquainted with the affair, and intreat you to give her every possible assistance, when I was told Charles and your brother begged to speak with me.

I was dreadfully alarmed at their altered countenances, and besought them to tell me what was the matter. Your brother attempted to speak—but Charles clapped his hand upon his mouth—You shall not, cried he, from mistaken notions of friendship, attempt to extenuate a most villainous action—Broughton—the fellow of all others that I loved and honoured—he is the man that has carried off the lovely

lovely girl under your protection, and who I believe is now dying by my hand, for refusing to deliver her up. I clasped my hands together, and bursting into tears saved myself I suppose from worse consequences. I asked a million of questions in one breath, as by what means the matter was discovered, where Broughton then was, for what purpose they conceived she was carried away; to all which I received either the most shocking or the most unsatisfactory answers.

The man, it seems, who told me that she went off in a hackney coach, on Charles interrogating him, recollected the number—Charles good-naturedly flew to find him out. He was returned, he said, from a village about seven miles distance from London, to which place he had conveyed the lady, and from whence he believed the gentleman who got up behind
his

his coach carried her farther on into the country.

Upon being asked to describe the gentleman, Charles discovered it was his friend, who running through the hall, had thrown one of the chairman's great coats over his shoulders, and jumped up behind.

Charles, on this information, hastened to Mr. Broughton's lodgings; he had not been home all night; that was near six in the morning—not knowing how to proceed, he threw himself into a chair, where he most unfortunately continued until Broughton returned—when demanding what he had done with Miss Granville, he received so many what he called evasive answers, that heated and offended, feeling for the distress of us his relations, and the misery of you his beloved, in consequence of this incident, he compelled Broughton to draw
in

in his own defence, and soon made a pass at him that sunk him to the ground, and fainting away with loss of blood, he left him to the care of the family, and an eminent surgeon; and immediately calling upon your brother, brought him to our house. Censurable as rash zeal is even in a good cause, I must not have you too severely censure poor Effingham. Broughton was the friend of his heart—as such he introduced him into our family, as such confided in him; and now to find him as he conceived a betrayer of the innocent, a false friend, and a base dissembler—many allowances were to be made for his consequential conduct, and you must forgive it. Your brother, notwithstanding all these strong marks of guilt, insisted upon it that Broughton was innocent—All the servants were then assembled and examined, touching their knowledge of the transaction
—the

—the result of which was, that we discovered Mr. Broughton, though he would not go with us to the concert, had neither spoke with nor seen Miss Granville, but when she stepped into the coach; but that Harper, your favourite Mr. Harper, had passed near an hour with her. We were now put upon a new scent—your brother went to visit poor Broughton, and Charles in quest of the reverend thief, as we now deemed him, I cautioning him not to draw upon the church, but investigate the business coolly and deliberately.—Away they both went.

Your brother returned in little more than an hour — lamented Charles's hasty conduct, and assured me that his worthy patron was quite as innocent as he had believed him.

It seems he does not scruple to confess, that his tender anxiety for Fanny would neither permit him to accompany us, nor to leave our house; he
therefore

therefore complained of the head-ach, and desired leave of my grandmother's woman to sit in one of the little parlours, as also the indulgence of a dish of coffee—Both these requests you may be assured were complied with—and having possessed himself with an idea that the dear girl was ill, he listened to every footstep, in order to enquire from time to time how she did—But what was his surprize, when, on reconnoitring the last time, he saw her trip across the hall, with a visible intention to get into a hackney coach drawn up close to the door no less visibly for that purpose!—He did not stop to think, but throwing a chairman's coat, according to the coachman's information, over his shoulder, got up behind, and went as far as where she alighted, and instantly disappeared; he would have followed her into the house, but was opposed by four men, who insisted upon it he had nothing
to

to do with that lady ; and in a word, kept him in parley until the firing off of a pistol, which he supposed was a signal that all was safe, made them retire. Mr. Broughton went into the house, had every apartment searched, but without effect—The lady, they protested, had only passed through, and got into a coach and four, which they supposed had by that time conveyed her to a considerable distance. As this was all the intelligence he could obtain, and as there was every probability in favour of the people's being wholly unconcerned in the transaction, he at length ordered a chaise to bring him to London ; on getting into which the people of the inn returned him his sword, which the men who had opposed his entrance into the house had deprived him of—and he arrived in a most unhappy hour at his own lodgings. Your brother assured me, however, that the surgeon pronounced

nounced him in much greater danger of a fever from the agitation of his mind, than of dying in consequence of his wound.

Charles came back about three o'clock, and said that Harper begged ten thousand pardons for the part he had acted; but that, as he was taking leave, Miss Granville called him into a room, and besought his assistance to fly to her father.

She said she knew stage coaches left London every night, and that she should conceive herself eternally obliged to him, if he would find her a method of reaching some one of them.— Finding her so very earnest, and that all arguments to dissuade her were useless, he told her that if she had the courage to set off in a hackney coach to such an inn (the place Broughton attended her to) he would in the mean time go into the city, and endeavour to secure her a place: but that in
all

all events she would be in the way of the first carriage at that house, and if no opportunity offered for her proceeding farther that night, she might at least depend upon meeting with one in the morning.

There was such a face of truth in this story, that we could only exclaim against the officious parson; and we sat down at six o'clock in the afternoon very quietly to dinner. About seven, Charles, your brother, and my uncle, went out in order to visit Broughton, when turning round the square they ran against two fellows, one of which as he passed my uncle, not supposing he was of the company (for, poor man! his figure is but a mean one) said, if that gentleman, meaning Charles, had been with his friend, we should have found him too many for us, and lost our reward. My uncle very prudently, because not noisily, communicated this to the two young

men, who bidding him go up again into the square, and keep his eye upon them, made such good haste as to set and secure them at the opposite corner.

Finding themselves nabbed, as they called it, they thought proper to make a virtue of necessity, and confessed that they had been in pay and waiting five days in order to execute the business they had the night before effected: that their pay-master was the reverend Mr. Harper, who shewing them the house told them that there was a young servant maid there that a great man wanted to get into his possession, but did not know how to contrive it, without assistance: that a porter had recommended them as very trusty and very courageous fellows, and they should want no satisfaction, provided they were but successful.—We accordingly lurked about (said they) until we received orders to go down to ~~some place~~ and wait at the door for the arrival

arrival of a coach, in which, or behind which, if there was any other person than the young woman, we were to oppose their entrance into the house, until by the firing of a pistol we should be informed she was safe at a distance.—The fellows moreover added, that a coach and four, with two women in it, to appear like a stage, was kept waiting in the inn-yard, which had a communication through a back door with the main road; but where she was then to be carried they could not tell.—In a word (for I suppose, on this interesting spot, you would wish me to proceed as fast as possible) they took the fellows immediately to confront the reverend villain, who at length, being so hard pushed as to have no means of evading a full discovery of his guilt, owned, that instead of Piddleton she was gone to — the seat of lord S——, where his lordship

would have met her, but that he had been detained on some national and unforeseen business; therefore excepting the little fright they might depend upon finding her very safe, according to their most extensive ideas of safety, which would indeed have been the case had my lord visited her; for he was, though a man of frolick, a man of strict honour.—Away went the good creatures instantly in a chaise and four, and arrived about three the next morning: so this was the second night they had passed in quest of her, and found her just as Mr. Harper had represented, much frightened, but unannoyed by his lordship's presence.—The housekeeper was very civil; she by no means approving the transaction, but upon the solemnest assurances of honour; but so impatient was the dear girl to feel herself safe, and I suppose preserve her deliverers from danger, that at her own request,

request she was removed at that late hour to a little town, and, after a couple of hours repose, was conveyed from thence to London. Charles and your brother, like men of understanding, never mentioned one syllable of Mr. Broughton all the way, and never was family more rejoiced than ours at beholding a friend restored to them. My lord disavows the fact, and insists upon it, that, however ill conducted, Mr. Harper must mean well, by sending the young lady to a seat where the head servant was known to be a gentlewoman and a woman of principle, and that he could have no other view than to engage him to do somewhat for her father.—His services for her father were scorned, and all intercourse broke off with such wicked dissemblers.

Broughton is so well recovered as to be able to see company, and instead of being offended with Charles,

honours him for his zeal in so just a cause, and likewise informs us, that he has presumed to take steps for the redemption of the father, previous to those for the safety of the daughter.

I have a word or two for you in the political way before I conclude, and when you have sufficiently gratified your curiosity with the historical, I beg you would give the other part an attentive perusal—or perhaps I had better dispatch this in the state it is, and reserve my politics for another epistle.

I am, &c.

E. SIDNEY;

L E T.

LETTER XXXVIII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

AND now for politics—No opposition being practicable, Mr. Stickler has at length taken his seat in the house—and yet, my dear, there was all the encouragement imaginable for ministerial perseverance—for tho' the mob roared at his exclusion some seven years ago, they were as harmless as lambs, whilst the gentleman contented himself with such honours as his circumstances admitted of.—But pray observe, my dear, when the evil had taken place, even the commonest optics could discern it was impossible things should have happened otherwise, and that patriotism should have prevented the constitution's violation, when they found the court determined to persevere.

H 4

By

By what means, said they, could we hope to escape, if we pushed things beyond a certain pitch?—The court, once possessed of the latitude of our darings, would obtain the exact dimensions of their own, and derive so much courage therefrom, as to venture to launch the bark and spread the sails of despotism full in our view; and who can be found of sufficient skill, or sufficient valour to compel them to contract them?—Not an army of Mr. Sticklers—He knows indeed very well how to *play*, but he knows not how to *contend* with the higher powers—he might have annoyed, but he would needs overturn—he might have awed, but he must subdue; and we are born to be melancholy witnesses of the consequences. It is however clear to me, that the court have so provided themselves as to make it a matter of little consequence whether Mr. Stickler is or is not one in the legisla-

legislation—A majority ensured, what can they fear from a little group or junto, who though they can correct, command, rule, and restrain every national transaction at will in their private meetings, can only unite to display their impotence and insignificance in a packed assembly ?

But wherefore this conduct in the court, and to what purpose ?—The strength of a commercial kingdom is its traders—the lords may demand, but it is we that grant the supplies—Yet, alas ! Sophia, have we not put it out of our power to refuse ?—A standing soldiery paid out of our own purses, and supported out of our own pockets, will enforce the execution of the established laws of the land, however violated on the part of those who made them—and, should we rise in defence of our privileges, terrify us into obedience.

The laws, at the time when revolutions were frequent, were not perverted from their letter in favour of any set of men, or wantonly exercised towards another. Every brave man had then a chance to be a general, and every wise man a public minister. — The high offices are now all filled by courtiers or court minions, boys or fools; so that if we resist the will of our superiors, our own arms are to be turned against us, and a barrier set up between the rights of the court and the rights of the people. I am by nature too volatile, and from custom too cursory an observer, to be able to distinguish so critically, or decide so judiciously on political questions as you can; your understanding and your leisure giving you great advantages: but it was, my Sophia, such a noon-day absurdity for the patriots to shrink from the provoked trial of skill, such a solecism in politics, if I
may

may so express myself, for the cowards to be the conquerors, that it requires little assistance to discover that both sides are perfectly censurable and perfectly contemptible.

Your father (and I am most heartily glad of it) is shocked to think he could ever pull with such knaves, and conceives strong hopes that your uncle will live to despise the fools, whose machine he has hitherto been: but your uncle has by no means your father's endowments, and is besides too much the true country gentleman to own himself convinced.

Do you nevertheless inform him to how great and good a purpose he has endured such toils—tell him to what effect his butts of beer and his fat oxen have been distributed, and prove to him that he has been aiding and assisting in the destruction of the country he loves, and instead of averting precipitated its ruin.

Your father having apparently so far recovered his senses as to be desirous of retirement from a bad world, though he promised not to become a misanthrope, it was believed by all parties, that your marriage with Charles might at length be successfully mentioned.

He was not propitious, though ashamed to acknowledge the contrary—He was, he confessed, proud of his daughter, and had once flattered himself he should have beheld her moving in an exalted sphere—So you may perceive, my dear, it is ambition rather than avarice that prompts him to keep you in your maiden state, in hopes of uniting you one day or other to a coronet.

But to you and I, who have been taught a just value of things, what are coronets and dignities but the baubles of existence—toys aptly calculated to catch the childish and the
vain,

vain, though wholly contemptible in the estimation of candidates for happiness.

If we could once unpatriotise your queer relation, I should have hopes still, that between them we should be able to bring all our matters to bear—the oddities and the virtues of their characters, when blended, making no bad compound—Your father's good-humour would return with returning prosperity, and surely as you have contrived to come at the knowledge of the mortgagee, some method may be struck out by time and installments to clear off the incumbrance, without the absolute ruin of the mortgager.—My mother having spun out her London visit to what she calls an enormous length, begins to hanker strangely after rural simplicity; and for my part, I am quite weary of this bustling life—Charles, who is as arrant a moveable as a chair or a table, will

will with pleasure accompany us—but to engage your father and brother to be of the party, will require a species of address, that I fear the best of us is not master of—Yet why Sophia stay in London when the shew is over—when the national hopes and fears are not only decided, but those of the individual finally settled?—But Henry will talk of his duties of office, and your father magnify common kindness into irreturnable obligations.

Well, commend me I say to the manners of your patriots, who accept all that is offered them, and solicit all that is withheld—But it is plain, a disgraceful courtier is more critical about the independance of his conduct, than he who is in the meridian of popularity, and the eldest son of freedom. I cannot therefore help fancying, that one great article of patriotic faith is grounded upon the Antinomian principles, that all things ought

ought to be in common, whence it is that we find them so familiar with our pockets, such ready companions and such attainable friends; nay more, that once connected with them, there is the utmost difficulty to shake them off. Take notice however, Sophia, that I only speak this of the flaming zealots, for as to your rational patriots, they are nearly such personages as any other rational members of society.

I can penetrate the feelings of our courtiers on every public victory, but for the feelings of the king I own I have no criterion. The whole nation is his—what distinctions or separations can he then make, without weakening his power, and committing an act of injustice?

Misapprehensions in every kind and degree of relationship will arise—Fathers and sons, uncles and nieces, nay friends themselves, have sometimes their little bickerings—but these

these bickerings never go beyond the surface, much less produce confirmed dislike, irremovable suspicion, and irreconciliation.

I should like to give you a slice from Marmontel, it is so much in point—but as I have not stole his thoughts, I will not borrow his words on this occasion, but speak merely the genuine dictates of my own conceptions—When a king so far degenerates from the dignity of his character as to become the king of a party, how unspeakably does he contract his power and endanger the safety of his government? Should the people on whom he chuses to rely abuse his good opinion, what remedy remains with him? Must he not overlook a thousand insults, rather than hazard the punishment of one; and be content to bury his resentments in his own bosom, rather than give a triumph to the party he has openly abandoned?

Having

Having gone these lengths, must not his retreat be rendered wholly impracticable?—Once under the hatches, and there is no disengaging ourselves—Could he nevertheless call in those to his assistance he had cast off, and confess himself duped and well rewarded for his unjustifiable confidence, still only a party would be his loyal subjects, and he must necessarily have an equal if not augmented number of enemies.

Should injuries be committed in his name, must he not bear the imputation? or should justice be demanded on his favourites, must he not strenuously defend them? The bond of all good government thus broken, the king is much more to be pitied than the unhappiest of his subjects. The people look up to him as the great redresser of their wrongs—they complain, they intreat—both complaints and intreaties are received in
such

such a manner, as instead of healing aggravates the grievance, and all is discord and confusion. Torn by his secret reproaches, and feeling all the danger, the indignity of his situation, when it is too late to retrieve it, he seeks for amusement in trifles, and in order to preserve his tranquillity, keeps every national, every cutting truth at a distance, until the people from honest despair use such means as they well know must produce a salutary end, and the government is renovated at a single stroke.—I must confess, however, that this is a poor, a faint sketch of monarchy in bondage, and even at best the imagination must do much to give it its due traits—Nor do I know why I so frequently depart from the domestic track; so unequal as my powers of description are on political ground, and so entirely as I am uninterested in public matters—Ye knaves and fools then, I will if possible bid you adieu.

The

The lodging occupied by your father though not an elegant is a convenient one, and has the advantage of many that are much higher priced in the beauty of its prospect, and the airiness of its situation. You will wonder to hear me talk of air in the metropolis; but the fact, Sophia, is, that they have carried the city into the country so that never was any thing so enormous.

I am indeed told that so unwieldy a head must in time destroy the whole body of the kingdom; and thus they account for it—The improvements in our roads and the accommodation of travellers induce those who have a little spare money, one and all to fly to the metropolis, where it is circulated into a channel from whence we have no returns, viz. foreigners never failing to send our cash out of the kingdom, in exchange for their exports, whereas the health of trade consists in
an

an interchange of traffic: moreover, the increase of buildings enables the parliament man, who used formerly to come up and reside during the sittings of the house in a little snug lodging, to have a house, and whirl up his whole family to London, at which place they continue until their empty pockets give them a hint to retire to their country seats—not to cheer the hearts of their poor neighbours with old English hospitality, but to do a thousand mean things in order to make a fund against the returning period that brings them back to the great world. It is also undeniable that provisions bear an advanced price at the greatest distances from the metropolis, in proportion to the increased demands of the metropolitan market, all the prime of every article of subsistence being dispatched to the most saleable spot; nor will our fine canals we are so industriously cutting through the kingdom fail

fail to add to the misery of its inhabitants, unless the legislation will condescend to regulate this important matter—a matter which one would conceive was of little concern, by the disregard shewn to it, though of all others the most essential to the well-being of all ranks of individuals.

But I believe it is at last understood that there are amongst the fore-stallers of our markets, and the oppressors of the people, very many who are their actual representatives, as it is notorious that amongst the immediate servants of the crown there are many smugglers—What security can then be hoped for?—The poor may weep their want of bread, the king lament his confined revenue, but well may thieves escape, when judges steal themselves—The knaves of the public will trim for one another, and thus it is in every respect that the glorious liberty, the boasted property of the subject

subject is ascertained and defended. But the world, my dear, is absolutely made up of contradictions. The most virtuous court in Europe is the most vicious—the best devised laws the worst executed—the freest people the greatest slaves—the most generous men the severest oppressors—the people of the nicest honour the greatest rogues. I could give you chapter and verse for all these paradoxes, if I was so disposed, but I have much more important avocations.

My uncle, as advocate for his friend the fop, has most curious debates with my mother; she, in defence of the rights of the sex, insisting upon it, that as love is involuntary, no woman is bound to sacrifice her heart, figure, and fortune, in return for being beloved; my uncle maintaining, if not a contrary, a very different opinion.

But if I will not have the fop, why not take Charles? — Good match-making

making soul! the reason is sufficiently obvious—Charles does not chuse to take me—Any body, in short, would be acceptable with him as a nephew, rather than your brother, because he will conceive he has done him some unfriendly turns with his fair favourite Fanny. He is therefore ever remarking, that it is mean and cowardly for young fellows, who have little or nothing to depend upon, to stay at home and dream through existence, when they need only venture a small way beyond the smoke of their own chimnies to make their fortunes. On these occasions, as you may easily imagine, Sophia,

—we all with wonder stare,
And think him a prodigious bear.

What a convenience it is not to be overcharged with sentiments of duty to distant relations, and released from the idea that works of supererogation
will

will ever tell in to our account!—Was I you, instead of the self-denial you resolve to practice, I would either pack up my few ornaments, or in case of extremity abandon them, and without one demurr fly to the arms of friendship and happiness.—It is therefore plain to me, that however we may have amused ourselves with the idea of kindred minds, &c. &c. the East and West are not more opposite—But lest I should be talking absurdly, when I mean to talk wittily, I will for the present only add, that

I am, &c.

E. SIDNEY.

L E T.

LETTER XXXIX.

MISS FIELDING TO MISS SIDNEY.

WHAT an astonishing mind you possess!—this moment scaring us out of our wits by dreadful relations, and the next entertaining us with your lively observations—But I think I never shall recover the terror and apprehensions your account of Miss Granville's treatment threw me into—Is there no punishing the wicked pandar, if his lord is above your reach?—But, methinks, these outrages on society should be deemed proportionably criminal to the better knowledge of their perpetrators—the extent and power of their evil examples. But I suppose on these occasions a poor innocent young woman must sit down thankful with her escape, and if she would not add censure to injury, ridicule to misfortune,

VOL. II.

I

keep

keep the violence she has sustained as secret as possible. It must, my dear, be a villainous custom that renders right wrong, or wrong right, without due regard to the nature of things, and the protection every individual, but in a more particular manner the weakest, is intitled to.—But congratulating Miss Granville on her deliverance, and leaving his lordship to his future punishment—and punishment will at last await him—I must take leave to say a few things on the merits of Mr. Effingham's behaviour.

What a miserable advocate have you proved yourself, accusing and excusing, condemning and acquitting in the same breath!—But the truth, Emma, is, that every species of duelling is wholly indefensible, and it is incumbent upon mankind to devise other modes of chastising a wicked wretch, than risking his own soul on a pass, or exposing himself to the danger

ger of precipitating the guilty into an awful eternity.

Mr. Broughton's concern for the helpless and distressed was noble, and his endeavours to save, the endeavours of humanity—What return, however, does he meet with?—His hot-headed friend, because he finds him mysterious, will conclude him culpable, and without rhyme or reason run him through the body.

But, indeed, our favourite poet tells us

The fool and knave by turns is good and wife,

And even by turns the *best* what they despise.

Which is the only method I can hit on to reconcile so glaring a contradiction—That the man who was all gentleness and sensibility in an enemy's country, should lift his arm against the life of his bosom friend,

and who is all benevolence in his general conduct, should be capable of playing the bravo in any particular instance.—I do assure you, my dear, most seriously, that I am happier far in my present dependent, confined and persecuted state, than I could ever be though united to affluence, fame, tenderness, and whatever is most desirable or valuable, if they must have the powerful allay this step has thrown into the virtues of Mr. Effingham's character.

Yet I need not labour the point—You feel all the impropriety, the immorality of your relations conduct—it is only I, who you would persuade me am most essentially concerned, that am to be unaffected by it; behold and blush, and correct this glaring inconsistency.

But little quarter soever as I may conceive Mr. Effingham intitled to, I will spare you for the present on the subject,

subject, and give you some informations that cannot be unacceptable.

Mr. Granville is at large—The money was remitted to the farmer at whose house he lodged when plunged into distress.

My jewels did not undergo the apprehended scrutiny—no thanks to my uncle though, for such was the respectable character of the man, that no one could conceive him possessed of what he was unable to ascertain to be just and honourably acquired—The casket, therefore, was permitted to accompany him, and is now restored with himself to its former situation. The parishioners are so fond of him, that I wonder how they forbear hissing his persecutor—But though they command themselves so far to respect the squire, as not to give public demonstrations of their displeasure, their countenances speak a language his

I 3 heart

heart must understand—however it may resist its force, or act against its own convictions. The patriot and I are upon the most whimsical terms imaginable—we neither shun nor seek each other, and it really appears to me, however he may think it worth his while to dissemble, that he is to the full as little inclined to the match as I am. I have lived to experience, that, as when we cease to hope we cease to fear, the consequential lassitude is preferable to the violent exercise the mind undergoes to so little purpose as mine, for example, has undergone. My captivity I cannot say is become pleasing, but now I seem to have no chance for deliverance I am certainly become more patient—but I will talk no more of it.

My aunt continues to all appearance, and the physicians' opinion, to get better—What miracles might not her miraculous recovery be productive

tive of!—She honoured Mr. Granville, loved me, esteemed my brother, and respected my father—To find her husband in a state of warfare with these once most valued connexions would both surprise and afflict her; but then would she not endeavour to render her resurrection (as we might justly call it) a blessing to us all?—My father would be replaced in his possessions; my brother united to his fair mistress; Mr. Granville re-established at least in his curacy, if not made master of the living; and I—But Mr. Effingham is a man of spirit, and must therefore be better qualified to shine at the head of an army than a family, in a martial than a domestic character.

I am, &c.

S. FIELDING.

L E T T E R XL.

MR. HENRY FIELDING, JUN. TO MR.
HENRY FIELDING, SEN.

S I R,

I THINK it my duty to inform you, that my father's constitution, in consequence of his severe disappointments, is apparently broken, his appetite lost, and his repose destroyed—The country air is prescribed as the only remedy for his disorder—but how visit the country?—he has no home to return to, no means of accommodation which ill health requires within his power—remembrance must be quickened at every step he takes, and his health receive additional shocks for every fresh regret that strikes to his heart.

But do not mistake me on this occasion—I am not fallen so low as to
solicit

TO MR. H. FIELDING, SEN. 177

solicit your charity for my father, tho' I could not answer it to myself to let your brother die without giving you some previous intimation of his danger.

You, Sir, are a judge how far resentments can be carried within the line of nature and humanity, and have a right to make your own determinations—As to me, my choice is fixed—I will soon bid adieu to England, and endeavour to rise superior to misfortune; and excuse me if I add, that should my father die unreconciled, tho' I can forgive you every disappointment of the hopes you gave birth to, and constantly cherished, of protection and provision, together with every distress your violation of that promise has plunged me into; I never can meet on friendly terms the man who has indiscreetly, I will be bold to say, murdered my father.

Your conduct, Sir, is no secret to me—My father's fortune and effects of every kind are in your possession—Large sums I know were expended by him, but I also know that he obtained them on the most usurious conditions—Might you not, therefore, relax the severity of your resentment, without prejudice to your interest, especially if I make over my reversionary claims to one estate, however irretrievably the others may be dipped? If any thing can be done to mitigate the rigour of your conduct, and soften his condemnation, I here offer you all you can ask on my part—only accept whatever is in my power, as the price of my father's peace, and to that end accept them without his knowledge—and by seeming to relent in pecuniary matters, however you may resolve to hold yourself at a distance from social intercourse, raise him

him from despondence to independence, and instead of a little lodging make him master of the patrimonial mansion.

I have well considered the step I now take, and the nature of the offer I thus make you—but am as fearless as I am regardless of every inconvenience that will affect me only, and cheerfully devote myself in the filial cause to save from the grave him to whom I am indebted for my existence. Was I desirous of imprecating your wrath on this occasion, I should tell you this is no party affair—My father has nobly renounced the court, but if he had not he would be still my father, and as such intitled to my tenderest consideration.

O Sir! my heart is softened, and I fall involuntarily at your feet for mercy—enable me to give consola-

180 TO MR. H. FIELDING, SEN.

tion to his bosom; enable me to dispel the clouds of adversity that hang around him; enable me to call him back to life and joy, and you shall command me to the utmost of my power and abilities.—Your answer will be impatiently expected by an unhappy man, whose name you will add, for he cannot write more than the initials.

H. F.

L E T.

TO MR. H. FIELDING, JUN. 185

L E T T E R XLI.

MR. HENRY FIELDING, SEN. TO MR.
HENRY FIELDING, JUN.

I TAKE you at your word—but observe, Harry, I must hear no more of your going abroad, and on the following terms will do all you ask for your father :

First, on the receipt of this letter, that you repair to the friends of Mr. Stickler, and, informing them of your reconciliation to me, tell them that in the service of your country it is your intention to offer yourself on the earliest vacancy for some city or borough ; and that, having obtained a seat by your uncle's interest, you will exert yourself to the utmost, in demonstrating your zeal for the public good, and in eternal opposition to the efforts of the court for the destruction of the kingdom—Do this, and
you

182 TO MR. H. FIELDING, JUN.

you shall be again my nephew—provided, secondly, that you absent yourself from a house, in which I am well informed you now spend the chief of your time, and withdraw your addresses from a girl, whose upstart relations have been courtiers for a whole century back; and be assured (for you must think no more of going abroad) I will at some future period find a match for you that shall make you ample amends. You must, however, go a little farther, and, thirdly, as your influence over your sister is great, exert it in the prevention of her disobedience. — I can only conclude with the words I have already made use of—do this and you shall be again my nephew.

I am, &c.

H. FIELDING.

P. S. But do you hear, Henry—you must never talk more of going abroad.

L E T.

L E T T E R XLII.

MISS FIELDING TO MISS SIDNEY.

WHAT can all this mean?—I have received orders to see that the late habitation of my father is put into the same condition as in his day of possession—that the books of his library are duely arranged, that his favourite birds are replaced in the menagery, and his park repeopled with his beloved animals—To what end, my Emma, or wherefore these preparations?—My father's taste can be no rule for that of another man; nay, I am sensible, my uncle is making some sacrifices on the occasion, and depriving himself of several things he particularly valued.

And why am I to superintend all this?—He can never have arrived to that refinement on cruelty, as to study methods of wounding the defenceless.

Yet

Yet I dare not hope, lest some new calamity should burst upon me. At supper, last night, he mentioned Henry, to my unspeakable astonishment, by the long abjured epithet of nephew—drank a chearful glass beyond his usual custom, and bid me be a good girl, that he might have reason to love me. It is, my dear, a dreadful thing to have to deal with humorists, to be the victim of caprices you are unable to account for, and yet have reason to believe yourself deeply interested—But I have so long been the foot-ball of fortune, now on the pinnacle of hope, and now in the abyss of despair, that one would not imagine I should experience much agitation at any turn of chance, or new frolic of my uncle's fancy.

I have this instant been thunder-struck—A letter in Henry's handwriting

TO MISS SIDNEY. 185

writing lay, on my stepping into the parlour, open on the table—O! woman—nature—self-defence! — But if it was mean, criminal, or unworthy of me, I could not resist the powerful temptation — and to my great, and yet unrecovered surprise, read as follows:

TO MR. HENRY FIELDING, SEN.

To convince you, Sir, I did not trifle with you, but am ready to advance every possible length in my father's favour, I accede to your proposal in manner hereunder stated:

Imprimis,

To join heart and hand with the patriots, until you, yourself, shall cry hold, enough—for, my good Sir, beyond the bounds of common sense I am persuaded you would not wish me to pass, nor unless some good purpose

purpose could be effected, ask me to devote my life and your fortune in the support of any party—Your will, however, in this respect shall be my law—with this only saving clause, that you allow me to reason the point with you, and assist your honest judgment where, from the nature of your situation, and your own uprightness of heart, it must be incompetent.

Secondly, I give you my honour, I will forbear visiting a family (who have, God knows how, incurred your displeasure) until you, yourself, shall otherwise decree—and provided you do not refuse hearing what I can offer in exculpation of whatever charges you may bring against them, on your own principles, that the liberty of the subject demands he should be heard as well as convicted, previous to his condemnation.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I promise you, my sister shall receive my advice to conform herself in all and every respect to your wishes; only confessing it my intention, as far as circumstances authorise me, to render those wishes agreeable to her inclinations, and the real honour and happiness of her family.

—And now, my dear Sir, if I am once more your nephew, let me obtain permission to conduct my father home in triumph—It will be a severe, a deserved stroke to his enemies—and his enemies are *courtiers*—And as you must have learned that his misfortunes and disgrace result from his refusing to fight their infamous battles against the rights of the subject, you will grant me, abstracted from the ties of blood, he has claims to patriotic consideration.

When I have permission to wait upon you, I will let you into a little piece

piece of secret history that will surprise you.—Thus, Sir, you see the Henry Fielding that fled, rather than become a representative in the court interest, returns to his natural attachments in the cause of his country—and it is the cause he loves. But, Sir, I shall be happy when you give me leave, which I doubt not of obtaining at some future period, not to confound the opinion of a party with my real sense of things—The true patriotic faith has this remarkable feature to distinguish it from the spurious—that the people's happiness, the people's safety, the people's prosperity is the great, the everlasting object; and that whatever runs counter to those capital, those essential points, is inconsistent with its dictates, and a species of heresy which ought to be diligently guarded against.—You do not mention a word of pecuniary matters—is it then possible you can set so great a price

TO MISS SIDNEY. 189

price on my little services, or consider my acquiescence with your will in so high a light as to receive it for a compensation?—Let me, however, understand you in this respect, that the measure of my gratitude may be proportioned to your generosity, and that you may find me as I ought,

Your's, &c.

H. FIELDING.

P. S. Be assured, I shall never think of India, or any other mode of banishment or advancement, but what you shall point out or agree to the necessity or propriety thereof.

So this is the happy train into which things are brought, and I shall soon behold both my brother and my father. But, my dear uncle, why not communicate the joyful tidings, and relieve the severe oppression of
my

my heart?—But, perhaps, he wishes to give me an agreeable surprise, without once adverting to the construction of my nerves—I will, however, appear ignorant to please him, but I think he would have repented his frolic if the tide had broke upon me instantaneously.

Only, my dear Emma, observe the address with which my brother accedes to the proposed terms of accommodation. You are on the point of leaving London, and so the youth makes a virtue of necessity, and faithfully promises not to visit you, when you are at a hundred miles distance from him.

He will be a patriot too, provided he may be a self-dependent one, and have leave to canvass the tenets, and impeach the conduct of those who, calling themselves by that name, are industriously destroying the country
they

they would persuade you they wish to save.

He will be a member of parliament, in order, you may perceive, to mortify his father's enemies—This, my dear, is noble, this is justifiable revenge; nay, will bind himself to persuade me to act agreeably to my uncle's inclinations, having first taken care to render them conformable to my own.—And now adieu to all my terrors respecting India, and all my apprehensions respecting my father.—Thus one sensible concession has had the power of making a whole family easy in their circumstances, and perfectly happy. My brother, by his piece of secret history, means, I perceive, to betray my patriotic lover's trust, and shew my uncle how well he deserves at his hands. The conduct is fair, and I think cannot fail of its desired efficacy.

But

But let me hear from you immediately, to explain to me the ground-work of this delightful, this invaluable superstructure, and teach me how far I ought or ought not to give my heart up to transports which I am at present unable to restrain.

I am, &c.

S. FIELDING.

L E T.

LETTER XLII.

MISS SIDNEY TO MISS FIELDING.

YOUR best courtesy, madam, I beseech you, with all proper acknowledgments of my superior wisdom; for the scheme of this honest rogue your brother's fighting the world at its own weapons, was all of my suggestion and planning, and by dint of my eloquence alone carried into execution.

The court has proved its unworthiness, the patriots shewn their frivolousness, and so Henry resolves to steer clear of both, and be in action what modern partisans are only in name, the friend of his country—and you are now possessed of the whole art and mystery of his conduct.

As to the sacrifice of our love, that was a small affair—Your brother had resolved never to marry, unless his

VOL. II.

K

fortune

fortune could be brought to some equality, to which end I find he had settled it (and I tremble at the idea) to go abroad; but now that it is given him to stay with honour in his own country, he has joyfully adopted and embraced the means, and we are completely happy. Justice Woodcock gapes for the meaning of all this—a draught for a considerable sum having put Henry into an unusual flow of spirits, and considerably improved the smartness of his appearance. Effingham (believe me, my dear, that young man has much merit) is in raptures at the change in his friend's prospects; conceiving, I imagine, a remote kind of hope (and you must not be so malicious as to disappoint it) that he will befriend and promote his suit at some future period—I need not explain myself, you will understand I mean the suit of his heart. Your father, instead of being rejoiced, seems

seems embarrassed on the occasion; as if not able to determine whether he ought to accept or spurn the good offices of a brother, who has so long left him a prey to shame, insult, and distressed circumstances. His son (for this Henry is all-eloquent) has however in some degree reconciled him, by proving to him that from the undue advantages which have been made of his necessities, the mortgage, though immense, may by degrees be reduced, so at least as to rescue him from pecuniary obligations — But whilst he sees the force of his arguments, he is shocked at the mad inconsideration of his conduct; for had not your uncle contrived to stand between him and the mercenaries, whose similar terms he should otherwise have accepted, you could never have seen this happy day.

The hour we leave London they are to set out for Piddleton—your brother, like another Achates (you have

read Marmontel) supporting his father, and exultingly conducting him to an almost forfeited home. Do you then, my dear, perform your part with a good grace; contribute all in your power to smooth his down-hill of life, and erase the remembrance of past errors—a pious work, in which Charles is ready to assist you to the very best of his abilities, the moment he can with propriety.

As to me, I shall not only visit the country with delight, but quit the polite world without a single sigh—Charles and my uncle attend us, where we will patiently wait a blessed re-union.

The fop has had his final discharge, and can on no pretence invade our rational solitude, for we have discountenanced his tender overtures in such a manner as to give him to understand we do not wish his acquaintance—and perverse as the Justice is, he cannot invite him to visit in the country, on his own proper authority, where he himself is merely a visitant.

Mr.

Mr. Broughton is perfectly recovered ; fatigue, anxiety, and loss of blood were the chief cause of his confinement, his wound on inspection happily proving very slight.—My uncle can ill brook the sight of him, but as Miss Granville has refused the old lover, and with her father's sanction accepted the young one, there is nothing left, but for him to make the best of so trying a disappointment.—Yes, Sophia, Mr. Broughton was the man that redeemed your worthy parson and friend from a prison, and Mr. Broughton is the man that will generously marry the loveliest girl on earth, though that loveliness is her only dowry.—Thus do misfortunes prove blessings, and *vice versa*, as appears best to the divine wisdom.—Let none of us then presume or aspire to be our own carvers.

Describe me, I beseech you, minutely your father's reassumption of his family consequence, as also your bro-

ther and uncle's behaviour on the occasion—Yet I do not wish you to dwell upon ugly likenesses of the human heart, therefore should the stubborn patriot act unworthy his humanity, touch him lightly, and leave my own imagination to finish the draught—I shall be sufficiently mistress of the outlines to supply your deficiencies.

Your brother has presented me a miniature picture for my bracelet, so happily executed by the artists, as to want only motion to prove its claims to nature.—These pieces of idolatry, my dear, which we condescend to bear about us, are admirable mementos of our attachment. I will give a hint to that effect to Charles—but you must not insist upon his sitting as Mars, for I assure you he has much more of the god Apollo in his composition, than of that quarreller.

I am, &c.

E. SIDNEY.

LET-

L E T T E R XLIV.

MISS FIELDING TO MISS SIDNEY.

STILL, still, my dear, am I born to experience that the cup of felicity is ever more dashed with the gall of disappointment: my father's altered person and broken spirits convince me he is come home merely to die, and that the next office I am called to execute will be that of sealing his eyelids for ever.

The whole town was up in arms to receive their returning squire, and I stole a view from a window of my dear and long lost relations.

The chaise so slowly advanced up the hill, that I could perceive two men indeed, one of which was not much changed from the figure of my brother; but the other, pale, thin, and dejected, had little or nothing of the appearance of my father.

This shock, for which your letters had in no degree prepared me, was such an alloy to my promised satisfaction, that I retired into a parlour, and waited in a kind of melancholy stupor, until I found myself in the arms of this faint resemblance of my once handsome parent.

My child, what am I to think of this reception? Can it be possible that you do not rejoice at the termination of my banishment?

Dear Sir, it distresses me beyond expression, to see you look so unlike yourself; your smile is forced, and I can perceive a sigh labouring to escape you—Is this the felicity I expected, this to be restored to my father?

You feel too sensibly, Sophia, on every occasion—These walls have been disgraced since I quitted them by a public sale—your uncle's graciousness

ness extended too late—but we will still hope for the best—Retirement and ease are powerful cordials, and your attentions will be more than half my cure.

My brother tells me he never apprehended my father's illness to be a decline, till within these two days, which, as he observes, is in truth but another name for a broken heart—so that you see the court is to triumph, and we must learn to submit.

I give you leave, said my uncle, to behave like a daughter, but you must not forget the other duties of your character.—Henry immediately went to the hall, and from the unfeigned perturbations of his mind at the sight of his nephew, I believe my uncle rejoices that it was at last contrived for him to be reconciled without falling from terrible heights on his part.—I told you, if I mistake not, that

he appeared to me to have some good-natured violence exercised upon him, to oblige him to follow his own inclinations ; and therefore, on recollection, must take the merit of your scheme to myself, as it was so apparently founded on that hint—But we will settle our claims hereafter.—After all the bustle and parade of displeasure, my uncle, my dear, actually seems proud of his relation—my nephew remarks, my nephew informs me—Absence is a fine thing for quickening the senses, and making a friend appear to advantage.

My brother has however already intimated his disapprobation of the patriot—My uncle looked grave—I don't, my dear Sir, object to him as a partisan, but as a man—you would wish I am persuaded to bestow my sister on a man of honour?—Undoubtedly—And this gentleman is, I must take the liberty of telling you, you know

know not what—You have entertained and caressed him at your table, accommodated him with your money, and intended doing capital things by him—But let us only suppose I could give you proof, that in return for all these instances of friendship and kindness, he was endeavouring to build himself a reputation with his and your party, without either your knowledge or concurrence—would you still think him worthy your countenance and support?—Surely no.

Believe me then, Sir, I have it in my power, and will within these few days convince you that such is the man you now harbour in your house.—He was thoughtful, but apparently not displeased—so that my patriot lover stands I must conceive but a poor chance for continuance amongst us.

My brother has paid the humane visit my aunt, though all insensible,

seemed to claim from him—He looked at her for some time, when, I suppose from comparing her present state with what she had been, and what we hoped to have seen her restored to (she is much worse within these three days) his feelings were such, that he turned away and hastily retired—I shed my tear of sympathy, and thus ended this painful scene.

My uncle was much pleased with his behaviour—Ah nephew! said he, what an advocate did your family lose, when heaven deprived me of that friend and companion!—You in particular was her angel, and I own I am softened whenever any of those expressions occur to my memory, which she made use of in your favour—I would give all I am possessed of in the world to have her restored—but fear it is a blessing neither medicine nor prayers can obtain me, and I endeavour

deavour as much as possible to be resigned.

My brother mentioned my father's declining health in terms that affected my uncle, but he forbid his saying more on that subject.

I am not, said he, such a barbarian, as to wish his punishment should exceed his crimes—The vanity, the folly of people, not their life, is the object of my persecution and resentment.—This you must confess was a sensible, nay a sentimental observation; and, I must think, bespeaks a well attuned heart.

At supper my brother mentioned that the patriots he found were for catching at the disgraced courtier, in order to prop their cause—a circumstance that in his opinion did it little honour, for he had ever conceived it was self-supported.

The

The patriot changed colour, and my uncle winking significantly on Henry, said, am I right?—to which receiving a nod of assent, it was plain he wished the subject should be continued. You will, perhaps, ask where my father was all this time—Fatigued and dispirited, he chose to go to-bed, but insisted upon our spending the evening with my uncle—so you find we acted only agreeable to orders. My brother rather maliciously observed how despicable a figure my father would have made as a patriot, when only spirited on by his own resentments, and revenging his own quarrels. A patriot, Sir, said he, in the honest sense of the word, is certainly the man who is ready to devote himself in the cause of his country: a man who forsakes his bed of down to watch over the public prosperity, and endangers his own safety for its preservation—not he who is the out-cast

cast of a party—that has had his fill of interested opposition, and has been taught the true measure of party friendships—viz. that they have their foundation in selfishness, and their dissolution from an inability of service.

My uncle was intirely with my brother on this ground—affirming, that a man could never sufficiently deliberate before he proclaimed himself of any particular faith, but that once fixed, he ought to be fixed for life: for that to fall from his integrity was not only to prove the instability of his soul, and make him contemptible, but to constitute himself a stumbling-block to others, by making them think little of the engagements which those whose example had perhaps much weight with them could break through at pleasure. I begged leave to make an observation, which, Emma, amounted merely to this—that I could
not

not but conceive a gentleman justified, who having been deceived into a good opinion of any set of men, on being undeceived, renounced all connexion with them, and started on what he was convinced was honest ground— But niece, you seem not to be aware that the man who adopts any tenet for his rule of conduct, without having first received every possible demonstration of the worthy mindedness of its followers, and the usefulness of its operation, invites the world to proclaim him either a fool, a knave, or both—for none but a fool who is unable to guard himself, or a knave who has a private purpose to answer, could submit to be so egregiously deluded from the path of reason.—Sir, said the patriot, those that look for perfection in any system of politics, look for what never yet was, nor ever can be found: it therefore follows, that the system least open to exception must

must be the best, and all good and all wise men naturally declare in its favour.—Granted, granted, said my uncle, but I hope you will allow, that if the basis is incorrect, the superstructure cannot be very perfect—Now, for example, if I was capable of arming myself at all points, and in order to punish the indignity my family has sustained in the person of my brother, was to set up the cry of liberty, and draw a multitude of well meaning, but mis-judging people at my heels—tell them, that it was in defence of the kingdom, and to relieve their grievances, I had commenced hostilities—should I not abuse their credulity, violate my own veracity, and involve them, by taking them from their several vocations to attend the fate of my manœuvres, in tenfold misery?—My dear Sir, said the patriot, you are much too critical in your definitions — self can never wholly

wholly be thrown out of human schemes.

But, said my brother, the universal good, in the which nevertheless every individual has its separate concern, is the only motive of action that can be just or honourable in a public character.

You have the advantage, nephew, palpably—and I feel myself a patriot on the very principles you describe—It was to check the growth of tyranny, not gratify any private pique whatsoever, that I connected myself with a party—it was to punish my brother's disregard of his own immediate good, and the good of posterity, that I persecuted him with so much rigour; and I now declare that I am no longer an implicit any-thing, but will dare to inquire into the whys and wherefores of my conduct, in order to avoid the shipwreck of repentance,
and

and the stings of self reproach—and if my brother dies, you shall then see ———

That you are a brother—for, continued Henry, if you become either a more confirmed or more vigorous patriot from that incident, you wrong both the cause and your own heart: for your brother's life or death, though your private, is in no degree a public concern; and though a natural, a justifiable object of your affliction and resentment, can never properly be thrown into the popular scale, because by no means affecting the nation or the community.

But will you, nephew, take upon you to say that I shall not more outrageously hate the ministry?

No, my good Sir—but you will hate them for a private not a public injury—for let me, for argument's sake, ask you one question—Should the
the

the first favourites of this land be brought into office, and it was possible for them to pursue the measures you now so justly disapprove, you would, I dare believe, equally dislike them as ministers; but your resentment would follow the men, whether in or out of employment, whose base ingratitude had robbed you of a brother.

Good again—I feel the force of what you say; and begin to think, nephew, your conversation will throw light on what has ever been deemed by me the mysteries of patriotism—and now that my dear boy is declaredly become one of us, I may freely open my heart to him, and neither apprehend imposition or ridicule.

And thus concluded this most interesting dialogue. My brother retired in high spirits—the harbour, said he, is sounded, and we have only to wait the accommodation of a fair wind,
to

to sail in and anchor to our wish—
I suppose the patriot will not much
longer continue our visitant; for
when once a man begins to totter in
the good opinion of his friend, the
friendship soon attains its final disso-
lution.

I am, &c.

S. FIELDING.

LET-

LETTER XLV.

MISS SIDNEY TO MISS FIELDING.

I AM beyond measure impatient to hear what effect change of air has had on your father's health: if not a salutary one, it is impossible but he must fall a victim to his own sensibility, and the ingratitude of our courtiers.

My uncle says, that such an event almost tempts him to become a public writer, lest the public should be uninformed of what it so nearly concerns them to be made acquainted with, as it is downright wilful murder—But though I will confess to you, I cannot with my relation so egregiously to play the fool (and you well know the abilities heaven has given him) I should rejoice to see a spirited state of the case in print, as I think

think it would have a happy effect on the minds of the people.

But what says the court on the occasion? Your father cannot produce a single proof that he ruined himself to do them service, either of their request to that purpose, or their consequential advantage?—It was indeed his humour to declare for them, rather than for the opposing party; and as he had an undoubted right to sport away his fortune, if so inclined, it would have as ill become them to reprove or restrain him who was his own master, as it was absurd and unreasonable for him to expect they should re-imburse him his voluntary expences.

That a feat was seldom or ever attainable in the House of Commons without expence, was notorious, and therefore the man whose ambition, or whose interested views put him upon becoming

becoming a candidate, would do well as a first step to measure the strength of his finances ; and as they authorised him to continue, or whispered the necessity for discontinuing the poll, regulate his conduct accordingly.

That every man who outrun his estate, might place it by this rule to foreign account ; and because distinguished by this or the other party appellation, claim support and retribution — But that nothing could constitute a man the servant or friend of any party, so as to intitle him to indemnification, but his proceeding by commission, influence, or concurrence—no one article of which could be testified to be Mr. Fielding's case, however warmly his friends, or petulantly his family might be induced to urge their plea to consideration.— Such, my dear, is court gratitude, for the encouragement of all future adherents,

4

herents, friends, and dependents—but we will think no more of them.

Is not Henry much improved both in his dress and address? the whole merit of which I assume to myself—but I suppose you will be for imputing two thirds of his improvement to ease of mind and easy circumstances. I leave it to him to do me justice, and properly subscribe to my importance.

I have not told you, that my mother's benevolent heart would not permit her to leave the poor sailor's widow and children within the contagion of a bad world: it was therefore settled that they should make a part of our cavalcade, and being arrived, take up their residence, which they have accordingly done, in one of the lodges in our park, where the children are to grow up a part as it were of our family; the grandmother

rejoice in their felicity, and the mother be kept out of harm's way.

You are glad Charles's hands are fairly rid of this beauty — Illiberal Sophia — the beauty of this good young woman's person is equalled by the modesty, the humility of her mind, and you might have trusted to her virtue, however you had suspected Mr. Effingham's.

I, who am indeed a heroine on all these occasions, from supposing it impossible for a man of honour to act dishonourably, was for taking her as a successor to Miss Granville ; but my mother says no—As the pretty creature has always been accustomed to a confined family, and a kind of self-dependence, it would be a cruel piece of kindness to place her in a situation, which, from being unqualified to fill, would be an endless source of mortification and distress. It is a favourite

rite tenet of this good lady's, that we ought to be uniformly benevolent, and by suiting our donations to the necessities, the particular demands and conveniencies of the case, put it out of our own power to wound where we mean to heal.

I was then for advising, since it was not lawful to do people too much good, that is, lift them by injudicious generosity out of themselves, that the profits of your brother's place, the purchase and uses of which you have now had perfectly explained to you, should be divided between four amiable families within my knowledge in equal proportions—the duties to be performed by the husband or son of one of them.

This suggestion was however in some degree overruled—Mr. Effingham insisting upon it, that as the man who officiated must appear like a gen-

tleman, the least share that could be allotted him was the moiety, the other half to be disposed of at my pleasure.—On mature deliberation, sixty pounds a year was allotted the widow, her mother, and four children, the remaining forty parted between the two other valuable people I had mentioned.—Thus will this little income be branched out, and though it would have been only a bare support for your brother, give joy and happiness to a dozen individuals. What the place cost Charles I never could learn ; but this I know, that it was bought in the public way of bargain and sale, and that he obtained a knowledge of it from an actual advertisement. — *O tempora!* *O mores!* — Poor merit, where must thou seek thy reward, when money is the key to all offices and appointments ; money the *ne plus ultra* of all ranks of mankind ?—I expect

TO MISS FIELDING.

221

you to admire my wisdom and my learning, though I am not clear that a fine lady ought to deal in Latin quotations.

I am, however, once more in the country, and may without a blush be occasionally rational, and at all times

Your's, &c.

E. SIDNEY.

L 3

L E T-

L E T T E R XLVI.

MISS FIELDING TO MISS SIDNEY.

MY employment, since I wrote last, has been a truly melancholy one—My aunt, who has for weeks kept us on the alternate rack of anxious hope and heart-felt despair, is at length finally relieved, and our suspense as finally terminated. The woman who for years has attended her in the capacity of a nurse, perceived her alter about five o'clock in the morning, and gently tapping at my room door, soon brought me to her assistance. I thought it would be proper to disturb my uncle, as he might perhaps wish to see her before her departure, and had him called accordingly; but was far from having an idea of the surprise the awful change would be to him, so long as he had in all appearance been prepared

pared to lose her. The mind, my dear Emma, is often deceived on these occasions: the distant evil lulls us into a serenity which is mistaken for resignation, until we are taught the distinction, as my uncle has been in this instance.

I was happy, said he, in the hope, however desperate, that she would have been restored to me, but now that hope is no more, and I am completely wretched—My wife, my dear, my once valuable companion, had you died sensible of my reconciliation with my children, you would have died much happier—but had my affection been suspended till this affecting moment, the recollection that it was your wish I should receive them, I should have courted their return to my arms:

When we approached the bed, she was sensible, though speechless—Her eyes dwelt tenderly on Henry, as if

she had been privy to the recent reconciliation, and actually possessed of the knowledge of the preceding disagreement.

She held out both her hands to my uncle, and perceiving he wept, wiped away his tears with the one, whilst she pressed him earnestly with the other. She made signs for us to come near her, put a hand on each of our heads, as if to bless us, and made my uncle do the same; then collecting us all together lifted up her eyes to heaven, as if praying for our future and continual unanimity—and in a few minutes afterwards expired. My uncle hung upon us and cried like an infant—You are my all now, said he, (alas! my father! whispered my heart, and can you be wholly forgotten?) you must live with me, love me, and by your gentleness and friendship, supply to me what your aunt has been

or—

—or at least what you knew her before her intellects were lost.

He gave me the key of her little ornaments, and bade me make such disposition of her wardrobe as I thought fit—then presenting each of us a small bank note for mourning, withdrew to give a freer vent to his sorrow.

In a short time however he returned—Your father Henry, said he, loved the dear departed one—buy him therefore a ring in her name, and in her name order him every suitable accommodation——Ah! Sir, if you but knew how indisposed he is, you would be greatly apprehensive——Away—no more, but do as you are desired, and spare me every farther conflict.—Thus it is plain, all our reports respecting my father's declining health are considered as interested ones, as filial finesse, to bring about a much desired event—But he will be timely undeceived, for the calm my

father now experiences does not appear to me to reach his heart, and his slow advancing disorder still gains ground upon us. He was shocked at the news of my aunt's death, and touched by his brother's remembrance of him—Poor man, said he—I will pay proper respect to the memory of his worthy wife, but your uncle has another trial to come, that I am convinced will prove a severe one.

I made my report in hopes to have subdued this mistaken partisan, but he frowned me into silence, and I fear is wholly unsubduable. What a happy circumstance it is that my brother was returned before this event took place!—for except in the instance of reconciling him to his brother, he soothes and persuades him at will.

Mr. Granville has left us in order to attend at, nay perform the ceremonies of his daughter's wedding.—Generous Mr. Broughton, what happiness

piness has he not communicated to a worthy heart! Would you believe? this violent persecutor, this rigid patriot permitted me to make him a farewell visit; but my aunt's death has abundantly softened his heart, though he cannot tell how to conform to its dictates, with respect to my father.

Make proper compliments for me to the bride, and tell Mr. Effingham his last letter was by much the most rational of any I ever received from him.

I am, &c.

S. FIELDING.

L E T T E R XLVII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

MY dear Emma, a most unlook-
ed-for and surprising revolution
has taken place in our family—
we are all reconciled, and my uncle
is no longer a patriot. But you shall
hear how this wonder was effected:

By the death of Mr. Scarsdale, a
neighbouring borough became vacant—my uncle proposed that Henry
should offer himself a candidate, and
he cheerfully complied with his proposal—Thus far you see all went well.

The young gentleman in the course
of a few days run through all that
chain of electioneering manœuvres,
you have so lively described on a former
occasion, and obtained his election
amidst the hearty bawlings of the
populace

populace of Fielding and Liberty, Liberty and Fielding for ever.

This great purpose accomplished, my uncle, with all the exultation of a red-hot patriot, writes an account of the merits of his conduct to a patriotic friend of his in the city, and waited with unspeakable impatience for the return of the post, to read the infinite applauses he was confident this victory would produce him——The returning post however brought him a short answer to his triumphant epistle, informing him that Mr. Stickler and that gentleman were no longer friends, but that for good and sufficient reasons the patriots were divided against each other, and the liberty and safety of the kingdom thrown into quite a new channel.

My uncle stood aghast—then recovering himself, put the letter into the fire, declaring the infatuation was at an end; for if the body of men
which

which had once firmly united in the national cause, was capable of dividing, in consequence of some private quarrellings, he was their most humble servant, and leaving public affairs to the care of heaven, and the spirit of the rising generation, would never more walk in the go-cart of liberty.

The patriots divided ! — surely, Sir, my ears have deceived me.

No niece ! by the lord Harry, it is true, and they want me here to continue the tool of caprice, and the jack-pudding of shuttle-cock principles— But thanks to the little common sense I am master of, I am free ; and now niece lead the way to your father— for as we have both of us been duped, it is but just that we should compare notes, and amicably laugh over our mutual folly and mutual disappointment.

I was so delighted with this command, that I had not an idea of its
natural

natural consequences; therefore, hastening to obey him, I opened the parlour door, and in a few words informed my father who I had brought to visit him, and for what purpose he was so visited—my uncle waiting without until I had made this little preparation.

I rejoice, said my father, in those enfeebled accents, which though familiar to mine, had never before reached my uncle's ear—we shall once more meet on amicable terms before I die. In rushed my uncle—ah! cried he, and does the person and the voice fatally agree?—they do, they do, and instead of spending years with my brother, I have only found him to lose him for ever. Is it not sufficient that I am just returned from the grave of my poor wife, but that I must—My heart sinks under the complicated misery—what you have suffered I need not ask—every pang is legible in your countenance,

countenance, and I shall ever take shame to myself, for my obstinacy and infidelity.

There was no being an unconcerned spectator of such a scene—My child, said he, turning to me, dry up I beseech you those reproaching tears—you did every thing in your power to save me from repentance, but I would suspect you of filial duplicity, when you was only relating facts, and withheld myself from my dear, my only brother, until—But we will die, if we cannot live together, for there is no surviving this second severe stroke.

My father said every kind thing to reconcile him to himself, by persuading him that the common course of events (not his intentions) had caused the misfortune he so much deplored — But such was the force of his feelings, that notwithstanding all our efforts, I was greatly alarmed at his distress of mind.

Henry,

Henry, who had dined with a neighbouring gentleman, could not believe what the servants told him, that his uncle and father were together—He flew to be an eye witness of what he had so long ardently wished, but almost despaired of ever beholding, and we seemed to lose all our former cares in our present heart-felt satisfaction. When we became more collected my uncle enquired if the patriot had really acted the part Henry had intimated, and on being answered in the affirmative, I was commissioned to tell him that my uncle could never see him more—But no sooner was the patriot informed of our family union, than he thought proper, self-adviced, to decamp, and saved me the trouble of a harsh and aukward dismissal from a house where he had so long been accustomed to receive the most welcome reception.

Thus

Thus, like the last scene in a play, every difficulty is obviated, every satisfaction obtained, and every reconciliation effected — would heaven by the restoration of my father's health enable him to shake off his languor and slow fever, which has hung about him ever since his arrival at Piddleton.

But, my dear girl, is it not a pleasant and striking circumstance, that a set of men, who by their *unanimity* might have made themselves in some degree formidable, should commit such an outrage against common sense, common pride, and common policy, as not only to quarrel with one another, but suffer those quarrels to transpire, and make their several appeals to an astonished public, who having for the common cause entered into a connexion with the common body, are unable from a private one, to transfer their attachments or rest their hopes

TO MISS SIDNEY.

235

hopes on a particular individual?—
Yet such, my dear, is the folly of patriotism. My brother will not however superintend the interests of his constituents in any such manner—he will weigh, deliberate, compare and separate, in order to come at the true knowledge of their welfare, and form his plan of operation accordingly.

S. FIELDING.

LETTER XLVIII.

MISS SIDNEY TO MISS FIELDING.

NEVER tell me such a tale—the patriots fallen out with the patriots, brother against brother, father against son—it is impossible—Falsehood and malice have propagated the report, and it would be phrenzy to believe it.

Neither

Neither Mr. Stickler nor his friends want for understanding—they are perfectly informed of the temper of the times—unanimity is their sheet anchor, and you shall not persuade me they could ever cast it away.

My uncle (now no longer Justice Woodcock, for his sweet Rosetta became yesterday Mrs. Broughton, and he is too much a man of honour to form either views or wishes with respect to his friend's wife) is in high wrath on the occasion—He knows the world better than to be the dupe of scandalous articles of intelligence, and most ingeniously places the whole to the bitter invention of the court—Be it however as it may (and we are justified in our honest infidelity, until we shall receive farther information) all your purposes have been answered, and I must bless the lips that first proclaimed, the heart that first suggested the happy news.

A letter

A letter to Charles from his London correspondents, confirming all you say—Nay then, all is over, and we must be content with scorn and ridicule.

So, Sophia, it seems that I, who went to bed the friend of the whole society of freedom, am risen an enemy to one half of its members—What divisions and subdivisions they have made of it! and there can be little doubt but in a short time we shall have as many jarring sectaries in the political as the religious world. I thought indeed, when the affair of the election was passed over so tamely, we had little more to look for in the glorious way—The public atmosphere became thick, the horizon overcast, and the sun of popularity, notwithstanding his present situation, set never to rise again—What a merry people we must be under all these changes and chances! There is, however,

ever, no remedy, and we must bow the head in submission to our destiny. Yet, Sophia, before I quit the subject, let us turn the bright side of the prospect towards us, and in the midst of our despair, we shall find cause for rejoicing—It will be now the good time for the sensible and the honest to exert themselves—The people are slow of suspicion—but once awakened and their discoveries are rapid.—Charles, Henry, Mr. Broughton—all worthy men shall unite, engross the representation, constitute themselves the bulwark of liberty, and chase the meteors before them—The king shall see and confess the wisdom and necessity of the opposition—his ministers shrink, the national reputation revive—commerce rear her now dejected head—plenty burst her villainous fetters, nor the assassins (forestallers) any longer give the wound of desperation to our peace, or the
alarm

alarm of famine to our ear.—My late love sick uncle shall be a real justice, many of our friends aldermen, Charles in due time lord-mayor, and the union of the city and the court, of the king and the people, be gloriously effected, and all those monstrous distinctions of the rights of the crown, and the rights of the subject, for ever obliterated, whilst the common interest beyond measure enlarges the common tie.

Commercial confidence shall again overspread the land; industry smile in its own chimney corner; every social, every domestic satisfaction amongst all ranks of the community be experimentally understood, and the rising generation, by adopting the same measures, become the terror, the honour, and the strength of Europe, and every European power.—Oh! how shall I prevail on myself to quit this heart-elevating description, and
its

its return to the insignificance, disgrace, and despicability of a modern patriot!

I am beyond expression charmed with your uncle's spirit, resolution and ingenuoufness, and will pray to heaven that no unworthy relapse may ever befall him.

For the life of me, I cannot conceive how opposition can conduct itself on this unnatural fracas—how the inferior orders will be able to enter into the private squabbles of their leaders, and make a due tender of their devotions for the good of their country. Mr. Stickler's late friend, who I presume we must now consider as the head of one of the divisions, has proved himself uniformly honest and judicious—Mr. Stickler's anger against him I should suppose would therefore be but coldly supported, and innumerable perplexities the consequence—I think, indeed, the people should demand a proper arrangement

ment of the articles of their political faith, in order to save themselves from blunders and ridicule.

Should it now be asked how we distinguish ourselves, it must be replied into the court, and two species of patriots—one who have their own interest notoriously interwoven with the public good, the other who have no other *visible* acting principle than the good of their country.

I could fancy I see the honest sons of freedom, now that the cause of opposition is extinguished, some turning to the right, and others to the left, and declaring for the man whose person they conceive to be most eligible—the court all the time with a *grin* of self-congratulation on their face, which would well become the prince of darkness on setting his paws on a timorous sinner—Yet this is England—this, this is England, the illustrious British empire, the center of commerce, the

bosom of freedom—Which of us, however, must not exclaim, chaos is come again?—I can no more at present, on this or any other subject; and therefore only intreat you to believe, &c.

E. SIDNEY.

L E T T E R XLIX.

MISS FIELDING TO MISS SIDNEY.

HOW roughly do you handle the sons of freedom!—but they deserve it, and may they meet with universal ridicule, as the just punishment for universal deception.—My father and uncle, though they could so long dwell at a distance, are now inseparable, and the whole contest between them is, whether the offence or the punishment was the greatest.—In proportion as my uncle condemns his conduct, my father accuses
I
himself

himself as the cause of that effect, and it does one's heart good only to be a witness of their love and harmony. My uncle has made some enquiries into his late favourite patriot's character, and has received such informations, that he declares himself infinitely happy in the recollection of what he called my perverseness—for, my Sophia, had you accepted my choice, we had all been undone.—One eclaircissement naturally leads to another—I beg, therefore, you would guess to whom Mr. Effingham was indebted for his disgraceful reception at our house; you are wholly at a loss—what think you then of the fop, your uncle's friend and companion?—It is even so, Emma—and his motive, as I have it under his own hand, for misrepresenting your cousin, nothing more than in order to prevent my brother's carrying you off—for here I have the written page

before me, that your grandfather was a courtier, and that you are a fine lady and a courtier, and that if Henry weds you, we are all ruined.

And here again, that Mr. Effingham is an intriguing and a bad inclined gentleman, and a warm abettor of the court party—that he has formed a scheme for bearing me, Sophia Fielding, off by violence, with Mr. Granville's assistance, if I can resist his solicitations to elope from my uncle; and for this and this only purpose does he mean to come to Piddleton.

Thus you will perceive that the first letter deprived Henry of his uncle's favour and support; the second made me a prisoner, barred the door against your relation, and threw Mr. Granville into gaol—The inclosed letter will however shew you his desire to make atonement, so soon as he is convinced of his error :

TO

TO MR. EFFINGHAM.

S I R,

As nothing constitutes an affront but the intention, I am sure you will acquit me of all blame, when you read the inclosed letter. As a man, could I fail of being imposed upon, and as a country gentleman (who has no acquaintance with the sword) could I take any other method of securing my niece, than shutting my door against you? As a proof therefore of my readiness to beg pardon, where I have innocently offended, I now with my own hand assure you, no person on earth will be a more agreeable visitant to me, my brother, my nephew, and niece, (for we are all perfectly reconciled) than Mr. Effingham; and his early acceptance of this invitation will be considered as a token of his forgiving spirit, and of his

his desire to let all past grievances sink into oblivion.

I am, Sir, &c.

H. FIELDING.

I leave you to make your own comments on this curious epistle, and to present it as directed in your own good time.

How able a physician is content, and how efficacious the medicines it administers! My father, though only a few days ago dropping, in all appearance, into the grave, is now the picture of chearfulness and satisfaction—not that I would be understood to tell you his cheeks are instantaneously plumped, or that health yet sparkles in his eye—but his restored appetite bespeaks his disorder conquered, and his countenance is enlightened by joyful sensations.

Henry is now perfect master of himself—Let the goodness of your
under-

understanding, says my uncle, be your rule of conduct, not the self-created faith of the designing—Examine that you may judge, be well informed that you may not be deceived, and rely upon my utmost approbation, so long as you retain your present spirit and principles. My brother tells me he has wrote to Mr. Effingham and Miss Sidney—I will therefore avoid if possible all anticipations, and conclude myself

Your's, &c.

S. FIELDING.

L E T T E R L.

MR. FIELDING TO MR. EFFINGHAM.

CHARLES, my friend and brother, hasten and fill up the measure of our felicity—my sister's hand awaits you with a fortune equal to her
original

original expectations, and I am permitted to unite myself to the woman of my heart.—Come then, and behold the miracles Providence has wrought, in preserving and blessing a late miserable family.

My uncle insists on bestowing his niece's hand upon you, and I am to receive Miss Sidney's from my father. May you escape every peril of your journey, escape every future mortification, and be as happy as Broughton informs me in a letter, this instant delivered to me, he is, and you of all men living deserve to be—in return for the large concern, and active part you have taken in the general felicity of your friends, and of none more than of, &c.

H. FIELDING.

F I N I S .
6 MA 65

